

AN OLD MANSE
AND
OTHER SERMONS

by
Henry Tucker Graham, D.D., LL.D.

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AND
OTHER SERMONS

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To the memory of the Father and the Mother, from whom
the children of the Manse learned to know the beauty
and sweetness and power of the Gospel of Christ, this
volume is reverently inscribed.

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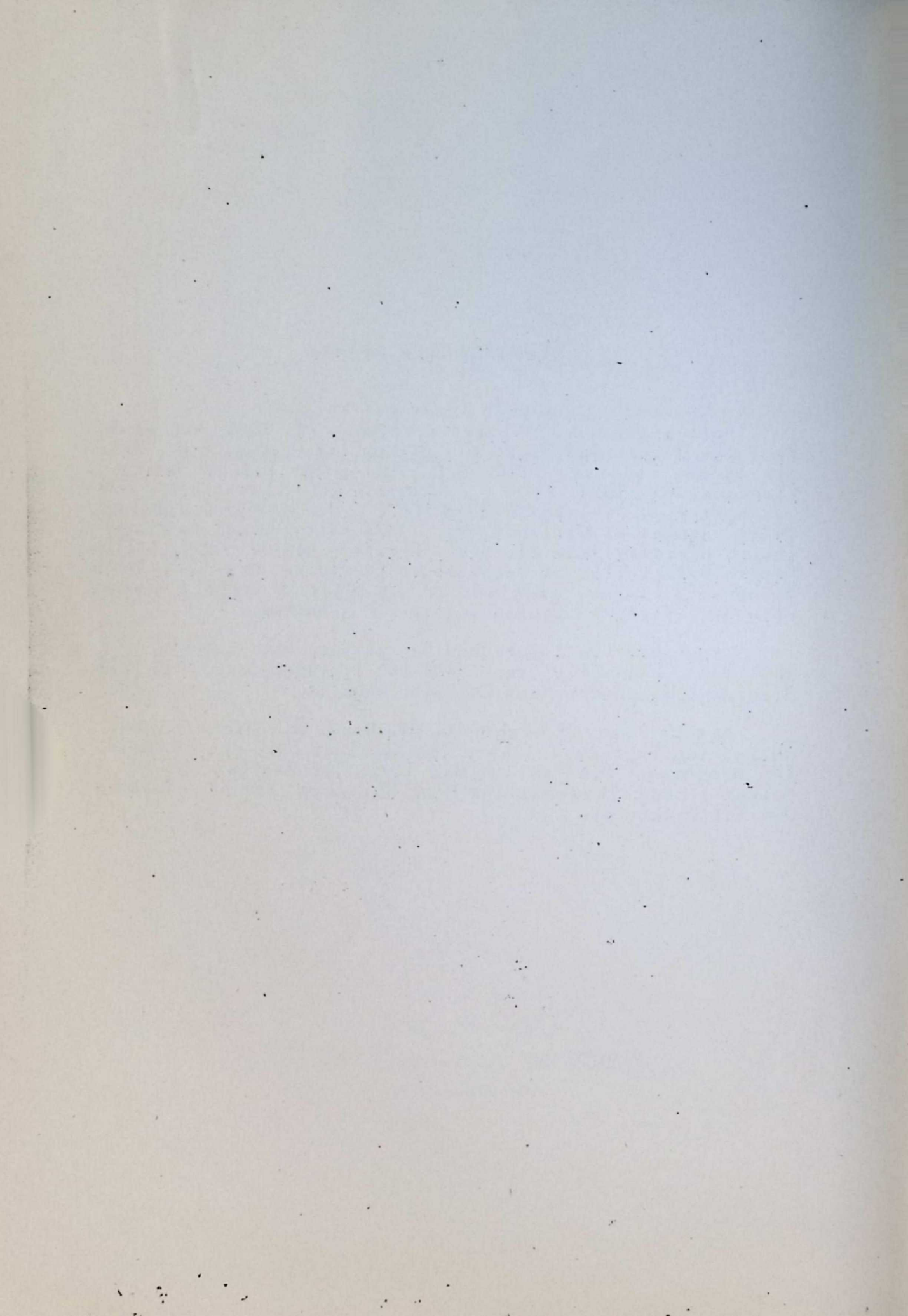
HENRY TUCKER GRAHAM

Born Winchester, Virginia, August 21, 1865; son of Rev. Dr. James Robert and Fanny Bland (Magill) Graham, A.B., Hampden-Sydney College, 1886; B.D., Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va., 1891; (D.D., Washington & Lee University, 1910; University of Pittsburgh, 1912; LL.D., Hampden-Sydney College, 1934). Taught at Millwood, Va., 1886-88; ordained to Presbyterian Ministry, June 21, 1891. Married, Aug. 12, 1891, Lillian Gordon Baskerville, of Mecklenburg County, Va. One child, Alice Sturdivant Graham, wife of Rev. Dr. Henry Graybill Bedinger, President Flora MacDonald College, Red Springs, N. C.

Missionary in Japan, 1891-96; pastor, Fayetteville, N.C., 1897-1904, Farmville, Va., 1904-08, Florence, S.C., 1917-1940. President Hampden-Sydney College, 1908-17.

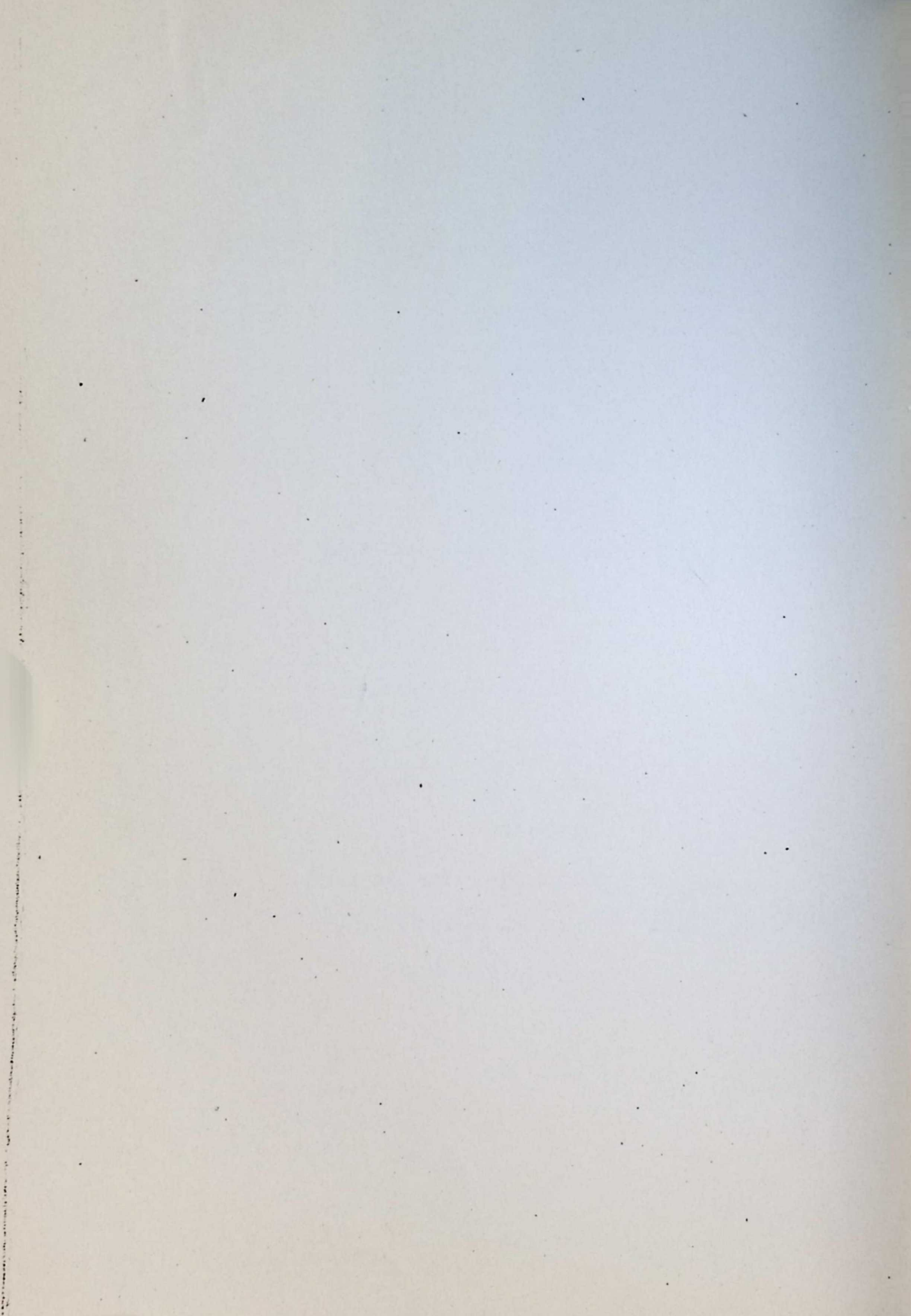
Author: Men of Might; An Old Manse and Other Sermons; Christ the Supreme Teacher; The Greatest Book in the World; The Minister; The Man and His Task; The Praying Christ; A Mother's Love; The Christian Home; Things For Which Our Fathers Did Not Fight; etc.

Gift of the Author Jan. 1950



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AN OLD MANSE

THE IDEAL HOME

Learn to Show Piety at Home
I Timothy V:4

Beyond the blue mountains in the lovely valley of the Shenandoah stands an old Manse about which cluster memories sacred and inspiring. It is deserted now, for the good pastor has finished his work among men, and the beloved companion of his life and labors for well-nigh fifty golden years was one of the white-robed company who waited to welcome his entry into that other home from which "they shall go no more out."

But this now silent Manse was long a vital centre of spiritual, and in the best sense also of social, life in that community. Over its threshold passed not seldom men of rare gifts and of broadest culture; and women admired for their charm of manner and their graces of character. Often in that family circle was eager youth privileged to hear the great problems that vexed either State or Church discussed by men of master mind and acknowledged leadership. And when that quiet valley was swept by the fierce storm of war, the gay young cavalier and the grave commander of armies--the men who were just "winning their spurs," and the man whose fame had belted the globe--found welcome at the Manse, and in the intervals of march and battle passed many a delightful hour in company with the genial pastor and his gentle wife.

To the doors of the Manse through the long years the weary and heavy-laden, the sin-sick and the heart-sore, the discouraged and distressed from whatever cause, came for counsel, and went away with a new hope in the heart and a new light in the eye, for they had talked with one who walked with God.

cross From its gates the poor and needy were never turned empty away, for the minister's slender purse, like Sarepta's ancient ~~curse~~, could share with others without stint and still provide for its own.

To its quiet halls came young and old with the story of their blessings and their joys, for the pastor and his wife were as ready to rejoice with them that did rejoice as to weep with them that wept. Indeed, in the atmosphere of that Manse there was no trace of the gloom which some so strangely associate with the idea of religion--no measuring the strength of a man's faith by the length of his face. There was gladness as well as goodness there. Wit and wisdom were finely blended, and with a sense of the responsibilities of life was

mingled the radiant joy of living. The genial humor of the Father, the swift sally of wit and the rippling laughter of the Mother, together with the pleasant jest and banter of the younger members of the household, lent brightness and color to the life of a home in which duty was the watchword, rigid integrity the rule of conduct, and faith in God the motive power.

Moreover, that was a busy home, no less than a bright and happy one. No drone was permitted in that domestic hive. Son and daughter each had an appropriate task, and was expected to contribute cheerfully a fair quota of service. Thus slender resources were largely neutralized by a wise division of labor, and each was taught to bear a definite share in the making of the home. And now, from their own widely separated homes, they look back to the happy days of youth and rejoice in the necessity that compelled, and the kindly wisdom that directed, this useful training.

Nor was the spiritual nature forgotten in that Valley Manse. The latter day folly that fails to require attendance at church lest "the children acquire a distaste for religion," found no echo in that home. Absence from church or Sabbath school was as rare as absence from dinner. Church attendance was an essential part of the life of young and old alike.

On Sabbath afternoons the children, forbidden to roam the streets, gathered about the Mother for personal instruction. Passages of Scripture, the Catechism, and the grand old hymns of the church were memorized and recited. Much of the time was spent in reading selected books or other interesting matter. But novels, and secular publications of every kind, were banished on the Lord's day. It may not be inappropriate to add that there were always fruits or sweetmeats for the children on Sunday afternoon, and a time for pleasant chat. The purpose, successful to a very marked degree, was to make Sunday distinct from all other days in its atmosphere and in its occupations, and at the same time a day cheerful and attractive--not sombre and repelling.

The Minister was a diligent and systematic student. None but well-beaten oil was ever carried by him into the sanctuary of the Most High. He believed that a sermon that had not wearied the preacher in its preparation was sure to weary the people in its delivery. His sermons were the product of a cultured mind, forceful and scholarly, highly spiritual and helpful. They were delivered with grace and impressiveness, in a voice clear, musical, and winning, and in language chaste and beautiful to a rare degree. So well-rounded were his

discourses, indeed, that they were as ready for the printer as for the pulpit when he laid down his pen. Yet he modestly shrank from the use of printer's ink, and seldom yielded to the request of friends to be allowed to publish some particularly striking discourse.

As a pastor he was profoundly beloved. His very presence was a benediction. Old and young rejoiced at his coming and found cheer and comfort in the kindly ministry of one who, like his Master, went about doing good.

And he was every inch a man. Gentle yet firm, kindly yet courageous, there was about him that quality of manhood which true men everywhere recognize without effort and reverence without stint. With a face so handsome that it would attract attention in a crowd, a graceful carriage, a rare tact, a manner so gracious and frank and kindly that all were irresistibly drawn to him, he was for more than three score years the leading citizen of his city and section. Men and women of that older day looked upon him as the ideal man. Their children and their children's children came under his influence, felt the charm of his personality, and in after years blessed God for the lasting impress of his character upon their heart and life. Men of the world, often critical and censorious of others, were hushed to silence in his presence, and as they looked upon him took knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus.

This is but a meagre pen-portrait of the Master of the Valley Manse, as we were privileged to know him in the golden years now gone. None who knew and loved him, whether in the vigorous days of early manhood, or in the mellow eventide when the swift passing years had silvered his head, will think the picture overdrawn.

But it takes two to make a home, whether manse or mansion, cottage or palace. This minister was peculiarly blessed in the gentlewoman who won his heart and graced his home. She was a helpmate indeed. None knew her but to love her, none named her but to praise. She shared in all the work of her husband's church. She went with him on his pastoral rounds, and in his absence went alone to visit the sick and sorrowing, or to welcome the stranger. Wherever the shadows of grief or trial fell thickest, thither she came with the radiance of her gracious spirit to cheer and to help; and through the long years a great company of the rich and the poor, the cultured and the uncultured, have been quick to rise up and call her blessed.

Hers was an extremely busy life. The crowded hours flew swiftly past, each with its special duty. The salary was meagre--the children many. The sewing for this large family was almost altogether done by the mother. The housework was directed by her, and at times done with her own hands. She was a notable housekeeper, and her home was a centre of generous hospitality, even in a community famed for its hospitable homes.

To accomplish so many things and to do them all so well, while maintaining her charm of spirit, her genial flow of humor, and her unobtrusive interest in all that concerned her neighbors and friends, is, in truth, a rare achievement. What then was the secret of a life of such singular sweetness and power? The answer is not far to seek. The "beauty of holiness" was reflected in her life because she lingered long in the audience chamber of the great King. Kneeling at His footstool, she communed with Him whom her soul loved, and learned thus to serve or suffer with serene and quiet courage.

Because her days were crowded it was the habit of her life to rise in the early hours of the morning, before the members of the household were astir, and at a rocking-chair in the corner of the bedchamber kneel and pour out her soul in prayer to the Father in heaven. If one of the children chanced to rise earlier than was his wont, and to pass through that chamber, his eyes turned instinctively toward a kneeling figure in that quiet corner. Often-times he caught upon the mother's face the glint of a "light that never was on sea or land." Or perchance tears were upon the cheek. Mayhap he heard his own name spoken in prayer as she plead with God for her boy.

Here then is the key to a singularly rich and fruitful nature. Her life was hid with Christ in God. The fires of faith and love that burned so brightly in her heart were kindled at the altar of the Eternal. Prayer was the golden clasp that bound together the volume of her life. The morning set the keynote of the day, and out of her Holy of Holies she came to take up anew the tangled web of life--serene and strong, unfevered, unfretted, and unafraid.

One other there was who, in the years long past, was gladly reckoned a member of that home circle, and added much of richness and beauty to its life. It was the mother's mother.

From the midst of a group of those who served their generation well, a face of wondrous charm looks down upon me from my study wall as I write. Whether the world would call

it beautiful, I know not. Yet no one who ever looked upon that face in life, or even as its features have been preserved by the art of the photographer, could fail to look again. A friend once described it with singular aptness as "a love letter to the whole world." It was indeed the mirror of a soul in which the scripture graces were blended in a personality of rare beauty and charm.

The heritor of intellect and culture, of wealth and social position, she entered with unreserved delight into those forms of social pleasure of which her Christian judgment approved. Indeed, without seeking it, and perhaps without even realizing it, she was ever accorded the central place in any gathering in which she might be found.

But she rejoiced most of all in the service of her Redeemer. The sanctuary was her delight and she was an active participant in all its work. In the teaching of the young she was wonderfully gifted, and to this she devoted much of her time and strength. More than three score years have come and gone since she was wont to gather the children of the Manse about her and tell them the story of the Christ-child, and of those other heroes of Bible days, with such marvelous skill that the picture of that eager face abides, and the music of her gentle voice still rings through memory's halls.

At length the day came when her allotted task was done and, while the bells were calling men to the House of God, she heard the call to higher service, and passed from the home on earth to the Mansions Eternal.

This is a passing glimpse of a Virginian Manse and of those whose presence made it the ideal home.

Is it any wonder that some who, as guests, tarried there for a season in the long ago recall the event as one of the unique and uplifting experiences of a lifetime? Is it strange that those who were privileged to call it home dwell with tender gratitude upon the priceless memories that cluster there? Five sons and two daughters were born and reared in that Manse. When the sons reached maturity and passed over its threshold to do a man's work in the world, they bore with them the benediction of a noble Father's life and were encompassed with a Mother's prayers. Is it a surprising thing that three of these sons became ministers of the Great Evangel, and the others have been called to bear office in the Church of God?

Are homes like this a vanishing asset in our church and national life to-day? The Christian home is the cornerstone upon which the church and the republic alike are built. To suffer it to perish is to invite disaster. It was the sweet singer of the Scottish hills who looked in upon a household that placed God at the heart of its family life, and then wrote this tribute to the Christian home:

"From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad;
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
An honest man's the noblest work of God."

CHRISTIAN PEACE

John 14: 27

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The late D. L. Moody once remarked: "There seems to be no lawyer clever enough to draw a will that some other lawyer is not clever enough to break." The outstanding example of this is the case of Mr. Samuel J. Tilden, who was one of the leaders of the American Bar, Governor of the Empire State, and the only man ever elected to the Presidency of the United States who was deprived of his office. Mr. Tilden wrote hundreds of wills. He wrote his own. But his own will was broken and thrown out of court.

But our text is a part of a will which no lawyer has ever been clever enough to break, and no court has dared to set aside. Our Savior commits his soul to the keeping of the Father: "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." His body is surrendered to the care of two disciples little known before that time, but who grandly proved their devotion. They took it down from the Cross and "wound it in linen clothes with the spices." In other words, they embalmed the body of Christ just as was done with the Pharaohs of old, and then laid it tenderly in a new tomb "hewn out of a rock." His mother he gave into the keeping of the beloved disciple in the familiar words: "Woman behold thy son; Son behold thy mother."

But to the great company of his disciples he left the priceless legacy of our text: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

It was not, you observe, silver or gold that he left us, for these might easily have been lost through unwise investment, or thieves might break through and steal.

It was not houses and lands that he left us, for these also might easily be lost, as has been done in thousands of cases in recent years.

But he left us a legacy which no man can take from us. We can lose it, but only by our own carelessness, indifference, or neglect. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid."

This, then, is our theme today: The Peace of the Believer: Christian Peace.

Peace is one of the familiar words of the New Testament. It is found eighty-three times from Matthew to Revelation. It does not describe something unusual, and extraordinary, and reserved only for the favored few. The rather does it picture to our hearts one of the normal fruits of the indwelling Spirit. It is something within the reach of all--something that may and ought to be possessed by all who would follow the footprints of the Prince of Peace. We catch an echo of it in the angels' song that broke the stillness of the everlasting hills and ushered in the world's first Christmas morning: "Peace on earth, good will to men." It breathes in the amazing promise spoken in the Upper Room on the night of his betrayal: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." The lofty message of the great Apostle to his comrades at Philippi throbs with the challenge: "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Thus more than four-score times does this word picture the joy that maketh not ashamed, and press upon us a blessed experience that every child of the King may have if he will but seek it along the paths that God has marked out.

What, then, is meant by Peace, and how is it to be obtained? Clearly, it is quite different from the common conceptions of men, and quite differently won, else it would not be true that so many of God's professed servants are "aliens and strangers" so far as this gracious experience is concerned.

Here is one who declares, and he is but the type of uncounted thousands: "If my life, and the circumstances that surround me from day to day, were like those of my neighbor here, or of my kinsman or acquaintance yonder, I might hope to have this peace. But, look," he adds, and at once you catch the note of challenge in the voice, "look at the thronging cares that are my daily portion--the work and the worry; the duty and the difficulty; the toil, the trial, the temptation that crowd my path as the days rush by. Surely, under conditions like these, you do not mean that I could hope to win this wondrous peace." But just there you are making a mistake as vital as it is familiar. God does not hold you accountable for another's duties or difficulties. He makes you answerable for your own. Yet if the truth were known, that other person whose place you covet, whose circumstances you envy, would be just as ready to exchange with you as you are to change place with one of them. For the simple fact is you have no monopoly of trouble. Your neighbor has hers,

your kinsman has his, your friends all have theirs. Each life, wherever lived, has its full share of duty and distraction and danger.

Moreover, the Savior's promise of peace was spoken in that Upper Room to a group of men who even then stood face to face with crushing sorrow. Their feet were touching the threshold of a life that was to be crowded full with suffering and danger. Had they been gifted with the Seer's Vision, they would have seen along the path that stretched its weary length before them trial and hardship, sorrow and peril manifold. They would have seen the headsman's axe uplifted, the gleaming sword of the executioner, prison doors swing open wide, and perhaps at the end of the path an uplifted cross, ghastly and terrible, waiting the coming of their feet. Yet to men situated thus, the Master said: "Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

It was to men and women at ancient Colosse who lived in the midst of a great pagan city, and who were pressed and oppressed by trials and perils and fretting cares, that the great Apostle wrote: "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called."

Thus the Scriptures bid us find and keep this peace not elsewhere but here; not at some other time, but now; not in some far-off dreamy Utopia that lies somewhere beyond the borderline of today--a Utopia of which men often speak and for which they deeply yearn, but which they never find on this side the grave. The rather are we challenged to have this peace, to hold it in our hearts, and to manifest it in our daily life, here and now, in the place and under the conditions in which an all-wise Providence has ordered our life.

For peace, be it remembered, consists not in the absence of disturbing conditions, but in your attitude of mind and heart toward those conditions. You may get it not by running away from duty or from difficulty, not by weakly yielding to fretting care, but by meeting and mastering these things in the name of God and by the grace which He stands ready to bestow with ungrudging hand upon all who humbly seek His help. For these things are everywhere. You can no more avoid them than you can escape the pressure of the atmosphere that fills the room in which you sit, and you must overcome them, or be overcome by them. Yet, even in the thick of the struggle, with trials and perils pressing hard on every hand, "peace like a river" may and ought to attend your way.

Henry Drummond somewhere tells of two artists who undertook to place upon canvas their conception of peace and restfulness. The first artist painted a quiet lake lying deep within the lap of the mighty hills. The cliffs rose sheer and steep on every side. Jutting rock and beetling crag looked down upon it and were mirrored in its glassy surface. High above it the storms of summer and the fiercer tempests of winter swept past, while black cloud and the lightning's vivid flash were reflected in its crystal waters, yet the lake lay calm and unruffled within sight of the warring elements.

The second artist threw upon his canvas a thundering waterfall, leaping and roaring as it fell from its lofty ledge into the narrow gorge below, and then seething and foaming, the torrent pushed its way over and between the huge rocks that crowded the narrow channel and so passed outward to the great river that traversed the valley miles away. But close beside the channel, and near to the tumbling waters, a birch tree stood reaching its slender branches far out over the surging waters. In a fork of its limbs a bird had builded its nest, and was sitting serene and untroubled within sound of the roaring waters and within touch of the flying spray.

Which artist had caught the true conception of that peace of which we are speaking? The first painting presents a negative situation. It very charmingly describes withdrawal from the forces that disturb--protection from the fierce strife of the elements that passed near and yet did not touch the crystal waters of the lake. The second canvas, however, places us at the very heart of movement and strife, and yet gives us a gracious picture of tranquility in the midst of turbulence, serenity amid distraction, trustfulness in the midst of striving and commotion.

This suggests an experience in my own life. Years ago I was crossing the north Pacific. Our good ship soon encountered heavy seas. Great waves pounded the vessel until she rolled, and plunged, and quivered from stem to stern. One morning as I passed along one of the passageways, moving cautiously lest some sudden lurch of the vessel should throw me heavily against the wall, I was amazed to hear far out on the high seas the voice of a singing bird rising clear and sweet above the noise of wind and wave. It was a canary bird, the captain's pet, carried with him on many a troubled voyage, and from its swinging cage far aloft on an angry sea, was giving out its full-throated notes of praise to the God who made it and was caring for it, even in the midst of conditions that brought fear to some, and discomfort to all, on board. It was God's sweet messenger sending out its cheery

song of trustfulness and peace to all who with it sailed the mighty deep.

"For we know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
We only know we can not drift
Beyond His love and care."

All this is very beautifully illustrated in the case of Stephen. His soul was a very mirror of peace. Men hated and reviled him, yet he gave back no resentful word. They branded him as traitor, renegade, apostate--terms that with every noble soul cut to the very quick--yet he went quietly on with his work of witnessing to his divine Lord and Redeemer. They threatened him with death, yet amid all the angry clamor that swept about him, he alone was calm and unmoved. "He felt within him a peace above all earthly dignities: a still and quiet conscience." Of Stephen Tennyson wrote:

"He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Though cursed and scorned and bruised with stones.
But looking upward, full of grace,
He prayed, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face."

Yes, they even charged him with blasphemy, but God himself hurled back the charge upon the heads of his accusers by writing upon the face of Stephen the glory he had stamped upon the face of Moses in the Holy Mount, "and all that sat in the Council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." For neither bitter hostility, nor biting curse, nor brutal stone, nor bloody death, could shake the peace of a soul that is anchored securely upon the great God and Father of all.

But Stephen is not alone in the possession of this high grace. Those who constitute the noble army of martyrs have borne the same eloquent witness to the grace and power of God, and even at the blazing stake have sung the praises of the King until their tongues shrivelled in the flames. Further, a great company of His people, regardless of race, rank or condition, have faced without flinching pain of body and distress of mind. Leaning hard upon the Almighty arm, they have learned to suffer and be strong.

So may all who bear the King's name, with a faith that is clear and a purpose high, learn to walk the sun-lit trail or follow the path that leads deep within the shadows "as seeing Him who is invisible" and who will never forget and

never forsake those who put their trust in Him. For Christian peace is simply the maintenance of a serene and tranquil spirit--unfevered, unfretted, unafraid--in the midst of adverse and trying conditions.

How then shall we get this peace? Three steps may be indicated. (1) We get it as Stephen did, by full and glad surrender of heart and life to Him whose we are and whom we have covenanted to serve. We can not withhold our loyalty and love, and expect to enjoy His blessing. We can not claim the rewards of discipleship, and repudiate its requirements. We can not profess to be a follower of the Christ, and still follow hard after the devices and desires of our own selfish and sinful hearts. Joy comes with full surrender. For "we are not our own, we are bought at a price." We belong to Him who has purchased us with His own heart's blood, and having given His life for us, He will not desert us in the hour of trial and of need. In the secret of His presence, peace and power abide, not as the result of stoical indifference to circumstance--the ancient Spartan and the more recent Red Man had that in marked degree--but true peace comes as the fruit of duty done and victory won in His name and by His abounding grace. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty * * * He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust."

(2) The second step in the attainment of this peace is a clear recognition of God's plan in your life.

If your life is hid with Christ in God, you are not the victim of chance. You are not the mere hapless creature of luck. You are not bandied about like a shuttlecock by blind and unfeeling fortune. God has a purpose in your life. As with some beautiful mosaic, He is working into that great and gracious plan the varied experiences of your daily life--its sunshine and shadow, its gain and loss, its joys and sorrows, all are being marvelously in-wrought into His wondrous purposes for you, and one day you will understand.

Years ago, there lived in the west a lawyer who in the practice of his chosen profession had won a good measure of fame and fortune for himself. In the troubled times resulting from the panic of '73, much of his property was swept away, and other trials followed in quick succession. Under the shock of all this his wife's health gave way. Kind friends suggested that a trip abroad would serve to restore her shattered nerves. The money was provided and in company with two of her daughters, she sailed for the old world. But on a black and stormy night in mid-Atlantic her ship collided

with another, and in a brief time went down carrying with it a large portion of its passengers and crew. The mother was rescued. Her daughters were lost. When she reached the other side, the cable flashed this message to the startled husband: "Saved, but saved alone. What shall I do?" What did this stricken man do? Did he cry out against the goodness of God; as many have done under conditions far less severe? Did he say: "Surely God does not love me or care for my state, else he would not smite me so sharply?" Did he follow the shallow counsel of the wife of the fine old patriarch and "curse God and die?" Nay, verily. His heart was sore wounded, but his faith was unshaken, and sitting down beneath the shadow of his multiplied afflictions, he wrote out of a full heart the beautiful lines:

"When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

For me be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live
Though Jordan above me shall roll,
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life,
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul."

His God is your God. The Christ who walked with him through the heavy shadows will go with you through all the broken way and "whisper His peace to your soul." And forget not this gracious fact--even "your disappointments are God's appointments," and that "if your face is turned steadfastly toward the Sun of Righteousness, all the shadows of life will fall behind you."

(3) Another step toward the attainment of this peace is that you shall keep your ear open to the voice of God.

He speaks to the listening heart through the pages of His blessed Book and in His daily providential care. He asks you to walk with Him in the way everlasting. He invites you to talk with him even as a child talks in unquestioning love and confidence with an earthly father. He calls you close to His side that He may tell you of a love that passeth knowledge. He speaks with wistful tenderness of a watchman upon the hills of life who never slumbers or sleeps. Yet other voices there are, persistent and clamorous, that would fain drown the music of that Voice that speaks to the soul of love and life eternal. Beware of these, lest listening you lose that whose "price is above rubies."

Some while ago a story went the rounds of the religious press that will happily illustrate this point.

Two young Scandinavians, friends in the old country, came together to America. Here their paths soon parted, though their friendship knew no change. One was John Ericsson, the noted inventor; the other, Ole Bull, the world-famed violinist. After many years, Ole Bull came to New York and was thrilling the great metropolis with the splendor of his music. Meeting his friend, he invited him to be the guest of honor at these concerts. Ericsson thanked him warmly but did not go. Some days later they met again and the invitation was repeated. Ericsson thanked him as before, and then added: "I know you want me, and I deeply appreciate the fact, but I ought to say frankly that I can not come. I have neither time nor taste nor talent for these things. I am too busy." A few days later Ole Bull appeared at the office of his friend, bringing in his hand the violin that had held so many thousands spell-bound. He asked how some simple mechanical defect could be remedied. Here Ericsson was at home and the defect, if it existed, was quickly removed. Then taking up the violin, the musician drew the bow gently across the strings. The inventor for a moment showed surprise that quickly gave place to wondering delight, and when his friend paused, he cried "go on." Again and again the violin spoke at its master's touch, and the inventor begged him to continue. During a brief interval, Ericsson exclaimed: "Is it possible that I might have had this joy in heart and life through all these years, and yet blindly absorbed in my work, engrossed in material pursuits, I have stupidly shut these finer things out of my life? Play on, my friend, play on!"

Many there are who, like John Ericsson, have allowed the clanging voices of the day to drown the voice of Him who is the mighty master of all heavenly harmonies--the clamors of earth to silence the challenge of the skies. However crowded your days may be, however much you must keep your hand on the lever of the whirling machinery of life, ever keep your ear open to the voice of Him who calls across the ages: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

"Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed:
To do the will of Jesus--this is rest."

PAUL ON MARS HILL

Acts 17:16 and 22:23.--"Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' Hill, and said 'Ye Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious' " (i.e. greatly given to religious practices).

Saul of Tarsus went everywhere preaching to Jew and Gentile alike the Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God. Whether men would hear or whether they would forbear, he passed from city to city, along the lonely broken mountain trail where peril lurked at every turn, and across the storm-swept sea, telling with flaming tongue the wondrous story of the Christ that died for our sins and rose again for our justification. In the course of these far-flung journeys he came at last to Athens, the celebrated capital of Greece, and one of the three most noted cities of the ancient world--Jerusalem, Rome, Athens, each having its distinctive claim to fame.

Here at Athens the Apostle entered upon a new world whose scenes and experiences were, in large measure, strange to him. For Athens, alike in its temper and its training, in its occupations, its aspirations and its recreations, was radically different from the atmosphere in which Saul of Tarsus had grown to manhood. This Greek city was at that time the acknowledged intellectual capital of the world. In Philosophy and Letters, in Sculpture and Painting, in Art and Architecture, and in all those historic and heroic associations that kindle the imagination and captivate the mind, Athens stood easily first.

Into the crowded thoroughfares of this far-famed city, there came one day a solitary stranger. His features showed the familiar Jewish cast. His dress was plain and travel-worn, for he had journeyed far and suffered much. As men saw him standing quietly apart from the throng, or walking alone through the streets, or pausing in the market place of that proud, historic city, doubtless he seemed to them as but one of the "common herd"--one of that unending company of strangers who daily passed in and out of their gates, and in all likelihood they passed by him at the first with a mere glance of indifference, or perhaps with open disdain. Little did they dream that yonder quiet, unassuming stranger was one whose name and fame would fill the earth; that his claim to distinction would far exceed, and his influence completely outweigh, all that galaxy of great names that adorn the pages of Greek history; and that the name of Paul would be cherished

in ten million times ten million hearts and homes long after Athens and its golden age had perished from the memory of man.

But if the Athenians were indifferent to him when first he appeared among them, if they treated him with cold disdain, his attitude toward them was just the reverse. Like his Lord and Master, he had a mission to fulfill and his soul was straitened until it should be accomplished. Hence we read: "While Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." This man was the minister and messenger of Heaven's high King. Graven upon his heart he bore a commission from this King of Kings to preach the everlasting Gospel to every creature; to "turn men from darkness to His marvelous light, and from the power of Satan unto God." In the light of that divine commission, he saw all men as sinners, and Jesus Christ as the only and all-sufficient Savior of sinners. Hence the one grand purpose of his life--its commanding and compelling motive--was to tell the story of the Redeemer's love; to bring the Christless sinner into living, loving touch with the sinner's Christ; that so they might know Him who is able and willing to save unto the uttermost all those that come unto God by Him. It was this absorbing desire to rescue the perishing that filled him through all those long eventful years with a zeal no difficulty could chill, no hardship weaken, no danger destroy.

Here is the simple compelling logic that moved and moulded his mind and heart:--if all men are sinners (and God says they are--for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"), then these proud self-satisfied Athenians are sinners. If the whole world is lost in darkness and sin, and the one light of the world is Jesus, then these men of Athens, in spite of their boasted intellectuality, in spite of the alluring charm of personal beauty, of classic culture, and of civic splendor are also lost, and to them the Gospel must be preached.

Therefore, as this messenger of the great Evangel moved along the avenues of this ancient city; as he looked upon its gorgeous temples, its sculptured altars, its images of marble or of bronze "graven by art and man's device"; and as he beheld on every hand the unmistakable proofs of moral corruption, and of spiritual darkness and decay and death, his spirit was profoundly stirred.

Remember this. More than any other Apostle, Paul could feel the magic thrill of this great city. As he walked its streets, the muffled tread of victorious armies sounded in his ears. As he stood in its market place, the voices of

orator, poet and philosopher echoed through the chambers of his heart. Yet, in spite of all this, like Elijah on Carmel, his great soul was fired with moral indignation against the gross and all-pervasive idolatry of Athens. Coupled with this indignation--this jealousy for the honor of Almighty God--was a deep and tender yearning for the salvation of a people who, with all their earthly light and learning, were still sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death--"having no hope, and without God in the world". For even in cultured Athens "the heathen in his blindness bowed down to wood and stone."

Moved, therefore, with burning zeal, Paul, alone and single-handed in that vast city, began to preach Christ and Him crucified, alike in the synagogue of the Jew, and in the far-famed "Agora" of the Greek. In the "Agora" or market place, the point of public concourse for the whole city, he easily secured an audience. Here the wit and wisdom of Athens gathered from day to day "to hear or to tell some new thing", and to engage in shrewd debate with any who were willing to cross swords with them. Keen-witted and alert, delighting in argument, past masters in the art of astute and subtle reasoning, were these philosophers of the Stoic and Epicurean sects, and when they found that this stranger had something new to tell, they quickly gathered about the Apostle and listened in puzzled wonder while he told in ringing syllables the matchless story of Him who in far Judea was born a child and yet a King; of Him who in manhood's hour "went about doing good," healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, cleansing the leper, comforting the broken-hearted, raising the dead; of Him whose enemies at last seized him and carried him to a brutal death; of Him who on the third day rose again from the dead, appeared many times to those who knew Him best, and commanded that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations. Truly, this was something "new" indeed to these learned loungers of the Agora--this story of "Jesus and the Resurrection"--and they knew not what to say. Some, indeed, drawing the mantle of pride and selfrighteousness more closely about them, ridiculed the speaker and his message. Others were both impressed and perplexed--perplexed because their sinful hearts were so darkened that they failed to grasp the truth as it is in Jesus; impressed, because there was plainly something in the flashing eye and earnest tone of this strange visitor that instantly lifted his message high above the heartless sophistry and empty casuistry with which they had amused themselves in the past, and they wished to hear from him more fully about these matters. Therefore, they led him out of the crowded Agora, with its noises and its distractions, up to the quiet of the hill-top, and when they were seated, they

said to him: "May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears. We would know, therefore, what these things mean." (vss. 19-20)..

Thus we come face to face with the historic scene on Mars Hill--an event that has always challenged the profound attention of thinking men. And rightly so, for to the Christian, at least, it is one of the most appealing and inspiring occasions of which history speaks.

The place itself is of classic interest, for the Areopagus was the most imposing spot in all Athens. From time immemorial it had been the chosen seat of the most august and awful tribunal in the land. Poetry and tradition, religion and art, had combined to throw about it an air of solemnity and awe. The foremost men of the city sat as judges there to try those charged with crime against the state or the established religion. The court sat in the open air, in the very heart of a great city and yet wholly apart from its crowds and its turmoil. The seats provided for the judges were hewn out of the solid rock. Over against "The Bench" were two great flat stones on which accuser and accused stood opposite each other when cases were on trial.

Legend has it that Mars himself, their great god of war, was here arraigned on the charge of murder and was acquitted, and hence the hill was ever after called "Mars' Hill".

Of all the long line of great causes brought to trial here, probably the most notable is that of Socrates--patriot and philosopher, soldier and sage--arraigned on this very spot where Paul now stood, and by the court of the Areopagus condemned to die, in the year 399 B.C. Two of the charges in the indictment framed against Socrates more than four hundred and fifty years before Paul stood here, are of special interest to us because they serve to link the appearance of the great Athenian teacher with that of the great Apostle to the gentiles. The Greek sage was charged, among other things, (1) with denying the ancient divinities of the city, and (2) with bringing in strange gods--accusations that might have been preferred against Paul with far more truth than against the picturesque philosopher of Greece. For Paul did them with high courage and with superb skill and tact.

We must, however, keep clearly in mind this fact. Paul's appearance on Mars' Hill was not of a judicial nature. He was not summoned hither to answer grave accusations lodged against him before a court of last resort, but rather that he might be accorded a more thorough and thoughtful hearing

of his high message than would have been possible amid the noisy throngs that frequented the market-place.

And surely no finer platform could have been afforded him than on this one grave, quiet, serious spot in "all that gay and frivolous city." The very atmosphere of the Hill threw a sober and thoughtful influence about his hearers, while all its surroundings gave wing to his words, and served to add point and power to his high argument. On the hilltop on which he stood was the great temple dedicated to Mars, the god of war. Just yonder in a cleft in the rock was the awesome sanctuary of the dreaded Furies. Crowning the rocky crest of the Acropolis that rose abruptly behind him stood the magnificent Parthenon, the most splendid of Greek temples, and which even in its ruins still commands the wondering admiration of all lovers of art in the western world. Above his head there rose like a mighty sentinel, keeping its sleepless vigils over the city that lay at its feet, the great bronze image of Minerva, armed with sword and spear and helmet, and reputed to be the guardian deity of the city. Tradition tells us that that statue was fashioned out of the spoils gathered from the field of Marathon near by. Thus, as the eye of the Apostle swept over the stirring scenes that rose above and about him, and that stretched away at his feet, he saw on every hand the temples, the images, the altars that bore melancholy witness to the fact that this city, so privileged and so brilliant, was yet "wholly given to idolatry."

And, as he looked, his soul caught fire, and with an eloquence born of intense conviction, he proceeded to expose the utter folly and vanity and sin of all idol worship. Taking as his text the altar that bore this inscription: "To the Unknown God"--itself a tragic indictment of paganism--he led his hearers through a course of Natural Theology; he opened to them the Book of Providence; he gave them a brief glimpse of Revelation, until at last they stood face to face with one like unto the Son of Man, the Crucified and Risen Jesus, the only hope of Athens, of America, and of the world.

This brings us also squarely up against this outstanding fact, among many here taught. It is a truth, clear, crisp and inescapable, and whatever you may forget, I would have you take it with you from our study of this great passage, viz.: The Universal Need for Christ Jesus in order to Salvation. "Without Me, ye can do nothing," Christ once said; for "no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

If ever, in all history, there has been a nation that might fairly be expected to get along without Christ and His gospel, it is the Greek nation. Men and nations not a few

have tried it. Some are trying it today. But with what result? These men, "wise in their own conceit," tell us that the Bible is unnecessary. If we follow the light of nature, if our steps are guided by the lamp of reason, we can live in a manner acceptable and well-pleasing to God--"if there is a God"--and all will be well. But here is a nation that tried this. Athens tested that theory to the limit. Its failure was dismal, disastrous and complete.

Keep clearly in mind what manner of men these Greeks were. In culture and learning, in the brilliance and versatility of their intellectual gifts, they are without an equal among the nations of the earth.

The great masters of ancient thought were Greek.

The most eloquent orator among the ancients was a Greek--Demosthenes.

The most massive intellect was Greek--Aristotle.

The foremost teacher of mental science and of practical philosophy was a Greek--Socrates.

The reputed "Father of History" was a Greek--Herodotus.

The greatest poet was a Greek--Homer.

The most brilliant soldier was a Greek--Alexander.

Even after the lapse of all these centuries we still gladly acknowledge the intellectual greatness of

"Those dead and sceptered sovereigns
Who rule our spirits from their urns."

But what is the outcome of all this? The tree must be known by its fruits. By this test, what is the fruitage in the moral and spiritual realm of all this intellectual supremacy? We answer: Moral rottenness and spiritual darkness and decay and death as complete and as shocking as can be found in any of the less favored pagan lands. Their very gods were impure, lustful, murderous. Their religion was little more than the deification of the vilest human passions -- "a putrid corpse adorned with the fairest flowers of human wit." Their beliefs and their ceremonies of worship "encouraged the most shameless profligacy," so that even the heathen Seneca said of them: "No other effect could possibly be produced than that all shame on account of sin must be taken away from men if they believe in such gods."

That is not my statement, mark you. It can not be charged with being a prejudiced Christian's estimate of the matter. It is a cultured and capable pagan--himself an orator, a statesman and a scholar--who draws this scathing indictment of the nature and fruitage of pagan worship.

Here, then, at Athens we see the light of nature, "the lamp of reason," left to work out under the most favorable conditions conceivable the very best that it can do for the moral and spiritual uplift of mankind, and its fruits are reeking rottenness, folly, and shame, and corruption unspeakable. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things . . . who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forevermore." (Romans 1:22-25). Moreover, God placed and kept this brilliant nation at the very centre of the stage of history, where light may play upon it from every angle, that it might stand for all time as a tragic witness to the utter powerlessness of mere man, with all his wealth of genius, to save himself. That it might stand further as an eloquent and unanswerable proof of man's universal need--your need and mine--of the Savior which is Christ the Lord.

If Greece could not be saved without Christ, can America be saved without Him? If the men of Athens--cultured, clever, charming, above all others--needed Christ in order to salvation, will you close the door of your heart against the entrance of this Heavenly Guest?

We, Christian friends, are facing a day when many are denying the Christ of God--flinging aside the substance while they think to retain the shadow; when, under the specious plea of learning and of progress, they would undermine the very foundations of the faith; when they would rob the King, of his Crown and sceptre, and leave him stripped of his glory; when they would substitute:

"Sociology for salvation;
Reformation for regeneration;
And civic centres for Christ crucified."

Yes, they assume to take away our Lord and we know not where they have laid Him.

I charge you, therefore, as you love your own soul, to keep your hand in lowly trust in the pierced hand of Him who was wounded for you; that as you tread the long, long trail that leads to the gates eternal, see to it that you keep close to the riven side of Him who alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Him (John 14:6). There is no other way but His way.

God help you to find and keep that Way as the days go swiftly by.

THE CHANGELESS CHRIST

Jesus Christ, the Same Yesterday, and To-Day, and Forever.

Hebrews 13:8

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save His people from their sins." Matt. 1:21. This is the startling message that Gabriel brought to a modest maiden at ancient Nazareth. Of that holy child that should be born of her by the creative power of the Holy Spirit, he added these amazing words: "He shall be great, and he shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:32-33. This is God's promise of the supernatural coming of the divine Christ.

At Bethlehem he came--a child and yet a king. For thus it was written by the prophets seven hundred years before he came: "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Isa. 7:14. Again: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Isa. 9:6. No palace in all the earth was fit to shelter this King of kings and Lord of lords as he stooped to conquer sin and Satan, and hence as "the crowning paradox of history, the mystery of self-abasing love," he chose as his first dwelling place on this planet, which His own hands had made, a stable among the lowing kine and a rude manger cradled His infant form.

At night the Savior came to earth, and "while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love." High above that lowly manger the hosts of Heaven thronged the upper air and sang their deathless song. The Shepherds left their tasks beneath the stars and came in simple-hearted wonder to worship the new-born King. Wise men came from lands afar, and kneeling in reverent homage laid their royal gifts--gold and frankincense and myrrh--at the feet of this King uncrowned.

Today as we stand, for one swift moment, with uncovered head at this sacred spot where:

"Away in His manger, no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down His wee head;
The stars in the heavens looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay,"

these words of Emery Pottle come ringing through the chambers of the soul:

"Strange that we so toil to fashion for our unseen ends
The splendors that the tarnish of this world doth mar;
Such palaces as crumble to a ruined age;
Such garbled memories on Fame's fragile page;
When all the lasting glory of our life depends
Upon a little child, a stable, and a star."

Years later Mary often walked the village streets with stone jar upon her head, after the manner of the daughters of the East, going to fill her pitcher at the fountain of the Virgin, even as the women of Nazareth do today. At her side, thrusting a chubby hand into that of His mother, and sharing as He might in her homely task, walked One who in coming days, with the curbing of Jacob's well as His pulpit, should tell a world athirst of the Water of Life--of which, if a man drink, he shall never thirst.

At the age of twelve, we find Him in "the city of the great King," not running its streets, or looking in gaping wonder upon the marvels of the city of his dreams, as a lad of twelve might so readily have done, but he sought the quiet chambers that looked out upon the Temple courts and talked with scribe and rabbi about the things of the Kingdom of God, meeting the nervous chidings of his mother with the quiet answer: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

When the period of vigorous youth had come, he joined His foster father in the carpenter's shop, and with hammer and chisel and saw, worked the long day through, thus giving the seal of dignity to labor and entering into brotherhood with all who toil and in the sweat of brow or brain win their daily bread.

This is the Jesus Christ of yesterday's morn--when the rays of the Sun of Righteousness are just breaking through the early mists.

Now thirty years have passed. The time of His showing unto Israel is come. The great clock in the tower of eternity strikes the hour, and flinging aside His carpenter's tools, He enters upon the mighty mission that drew him from His throne in the heavens down to the Manger and the Cross and the Tomb.

Follow Him as He goes about doing good--healing the sick, comforting the weary, helping the weak, cheering the

downcast, binding up the broken-hearted, and calling all men to repent, believe and turn to God.

Among the world's great teachers, Jesus Christ stands without a peer. "Never man spake like this man" was the verdict even of His foes. "The people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." Read the greatest of all sermons. It begins with a strange note of benediction, in utter contrast with the thoughts of earthborn men:--"Happy the poor in spirit"--"Happy the mourner;" "Happy the pure in heart." "Happy the meek." It is vibrant with solemn warning: "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. 5:20). It closes with the crash of thunder as the hour of testing comes, when amid the sweep of the tempest and the swirl of angry waters men shall discover whether the house they have builded here rests upon the shifting sand or is anchored upon the Rock that faileth never.

Men asked Him: "Who is my neighbor?" and He answered with the exquisite story of the Good Samaritan. They quarreled with the company He kept--"This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." In answer there came swift from his great heart the parable of the Shepherd and the Sheep. The sheep had leaped the fold and wandered long and far upon the mountains, bleak and bare, until it became sick and helpless and ready to die. But the Shepherd sought the lost. He followed it along the rough and broken mountain trail, down into the deep valley, through the tangled thicket and across the rushing torrent. He left here and there upon the sharp stones of the way the print of his bleeding feet, yet the Shepherd pressed on until he found the sheep that was lost.

To this, He added the matchless story of another wanderer--the lad that left the father's house and went out into the world to become "lord of himself, that heritage of woe." Caught in the swift-running tides of evil, he was swept into the far country of sin and shame, where he sank so low that hogs and harlots were his daily companions, and the husks that the swine did eat his daily food. Sin-sick and heart-sore and broken, he soon wearied of it all and turned his face toward the home he had once so proudly left--there to find the welcome that ever waits the coming of the wanderer--the open door, the outstretched arms, the pardoning kiss, for he that was dead is alive again and he that was lost is found. And there was joy in the Shepherd's heart and joy in all the Father's house "over one sinner that repenteth." Yes, "this man receiveth sinners" for He came to earth to seek and save the lost.

About a passover board in an upper room along the narrow crowded streets of Israel's Capital, a group of men sat with heavy hearts under the vague shadow of hastening ills--feeling rather than seeing the handwriting on the wall. To men thus facing danger and death, the Master spoke these deathless words: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27).

Was there ever Teacher like unto Him? In the beauty, the simplicity, the profundity, the sublimity of His teachings, He stands immeasurably above all others.

In this, His followers reverently claim and proclaim only that which those beyond the Christian pale frankly admit. In a secular paper printed in the Mikado's land I read one day with astonished eyes these words. They are from the pen of a Buddhist Editor, a man whose life-task it was to try to bolster up the slowly crumbling edifice of paganism. Yet this is what he wrote:

"It is the glory of mankind that Jesus of Nazareth lived. Every word, every phrase of Christ's should influence us. In the four Gospels, the noblest and wisest morality of the world appears. Christ's character and teachings live forever."

This is one phase of our Jesus of yesterday--the Teacher superb, supreme, sublime.

But he who taught as never man taught, also wrought as never man wrought. Side by side with his words of tender grace and wisdom stand his works of love and power.

Others shrank from the ghastly figure of the leper. His touch was pollution. The very sight of him was loathsome. When a leper broke through the crowd one day, others drew back but Jesus laid His healing hand upon the friendless form, saying "Be thou clean," and straightway his leprosy departed from him.

There was in Jerusalem a man born blind. In more than forty years he had never seen the light of day. He knew nothing of the charm of the human face, of the glory of the starry heavens, or of the wonders of mountain and valley and flowing stream. One day those sightless eyes, thrilled by the touch of a tender hand, opened wide and looked into the face of the Son of Man, while trembling lips murmured: "Lord, I believe."

The shadow of a great grief lies upon that Bethany home, about which gather so many tender and sacred memories. The family circle is broken. Lazarus is dead. After some days the intimate and trusted Friend of the living and the dead comes to mingle His tears with the tears of those who weep for a brother dead. Beside the silent tomb a commanding voice uttered three words: "Lazarus, come hither," and he that was dead came forth. In the presence of the Lord of Life, death could not abide, but folding its tents like the Arabs, it silently fled away. Thus three and thirty times the inspired record describes this outflashing of divine power and reminds us that God was moving with resistless might amidst his ancient people.

There were in our Lord's day, as there are today, and have been in all the centuries that stretch between, those who discredit the miracles. By some strange freak of the imagination, they fancy that to deny the supernatural places them among the intellectuals.

There is a charming story of David Hume--historian and philosopher, brilliant of intellect but blind of heart. He called one night at the study of a friend, and both being Scotchmen, they were soon engaged in high debate. Hume insisted that miracles are impossible, that there is no room for the supernatural in the order of nature, and no need for a divine revelation, even if such a thing were possible. "We have the light of nature," he said, "follow that and all will be well." Soon he bade his friend good night and declining either guide or light, undertook to find his own way from the upper floor down the dark stairway and through the winding hall to the exit. But in the darkness he missed the turn and wandered into the basement, and there stumbled helplessly about over boxes and other rubbish. Soon after his departure, his friend chanced to go out into the upper hall, and hearing suspicious noises below, seized his candle, and quickly descended to the basement on a tour of investigation. There, to his amazement and amusement, he found Hume stumbling about in the darkness and groping blindly for a door he could not find. Holding aloft his candle, and with a merry twinkle, the host exclaimed; "Ah, Davie, Davie, how about the light of nature now, how about the light of nature now? Don't you think you need another and a better light to guide you to the doors of earth--and Heaven?"

Yet there are thousands who, like David Hume, by some strange twist of the mind, fancy that denial of the supernatural gives proof of superior intellectual powers! As well expect the sun to ride the Heavens in majesty and splendor and yet give out neither light nor heat as to expect the Son

of God to move among men--the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, and yet give no supernatural proofs of his presence and his power.

Keep clearly in mind this fact: we have no proof of the words of Christ that does not apply with equal force to His works. The Sermon on the Mount, the marvelous group of parables in Matthew XIII and in Luke XV, the conversation with Nicodemus or with the woman at the well, the farewell address to the twelve, are no more clearly evidenced than is the healing of the paralytic, or the release of the demoniac from his fearful thralldom, or the feeding of the five thousand. We have precisely the same authority for the one as for the other--the testimony of God's Book. His teachings and His miracles are so intertwined and interlocked that to tear them apart were the work not of the surgeon but of the vandal.

Perhaps the most saddening volume my eyes have seen bears on its face a title that seems innocent enough. Outwardly "a sumptuous volume," it is the handsomest book on my library shelves. It was published by order of Congress, at the expense of the American taxpayer (more's the pity!), and in binding and paper expresses the triumph of the bookmaker's art. Its title is: "The Morals of Jesus" (or "The Philosophy of Jesus") but it is popularly known as "Jefferson's Bible." Moreover, every sentence contained in the body of the volume is true, because the exact words of Scripture are given. The hurt consists in its omissions. The fault lies not in what it says but in what it fails to say. High treason lies in altering the message of the great King or in tampering with official records just as surely as in open defiance of the royal authority. Yet this is just what Mr. Jefferson has done. He has thrown aside twenty-three of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. Then he has gone through the four Gospels with a pair of scissors and has cut away perhaps two-thirds of the Gospel record, rejecting the miracles but retaining most, though not all, even of the words of the Master. Just why Thomas Jefferson, in the year of grace 1819, was more accurately informed as to what Jesus said and did than were John and Matthew who companied with Him for three marvelous years in the first century, is not explained. Yet this unhappy venture assumes and asserts no less than this. He has eliminated every trace of the supernatural, wholly oblivious of the fact that a Samson shorn of his locks is a magnificent spectacle as compared with a Christ shorn of his power. He has sought to rob us of the Savior of sinners. He has left us a mere Teacher of Morals. He has "taken away my Lord, and I know not where he has laid Him." But with every click of those scissors we seem to

hear the resonant voice of Him who leaned upon the Savior's bosom lifted in solemn warning: "If any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this Prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life." (Rev. 22:19).

On the campus at the University of Virginia stands a bronze statue of Thomas Jefferson. Some years ago the freshmen, under cover of darkness, "went out on a lark" and painted this statue in flaming colors. When the University awoke next morning, the faculty, the older students and the residents alike, were outraged, and rightly so, for to disfigure that statue was in their eyes little less than sacrilege. But Mr. Jefferson had set those boys an unfortunate example. He had been guilty of a far graver fault than they. Those thoughtless lads defaced a piece of dead metal; a venerable statesman, honored by his country as few men have been, passed a ~~smudge~~ across the face of Him who brought life and immortality to light. "The Morals of Jesus" then, is simply a monument to a great man's folly--a very grave folly of a very great man. For to mutilate His Gospels is to dishonor Him who is revealed therein in all the fulness of His wisdom and love and power. "When the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the preaching of foolishness to save them that believe," "for the cross of Christ is to the Jew a stumbling block and to the Greek foolishness, but to him that believeth, the wisdom of God and the power of God" through faith unto Salvation.

If the record of His words is trustworthy, the record of His works is not less true. Our authority for each is the same--the testimony of God's Book. Of what avail His friendly touch and His gracious words to the leper if the wretched man must go on in the fearful grip of his disease? Of what value those mighty words: "I am the Resurrection and the Life"--which after nineteen hundred years still thrill our hearts and which are so impressively rehearsed at each recurring Easter-tide, and now and again in those silent cities where only those that sleep abide--had they been uttered in the presence of an unyielding tomb at Bethany; or if, in the tomb of Joseph's garden, the seal of silence had lain unbroken upon the lips that uttered them? "The works that I do bear witness of Me that the Father hath sent Me." (John 5:36).

In a lonely dungeon cell above the bleak hills that flank the valley of the Dead Sea, a great servant of the Master lay "in durance vile." As a son of God's great out-of-doors, confinement was telling heavily on body and mind. But Jesus did not rescue him. He did not do at all the things that John expected Him to do, and as a result doubts, dark,

cruel, clinging, gripped his soul. As he paced his narrow cell, the question kept pounding at his heart: "Can this be the Christ?" But John was too big, too good, too great idly to nurse his doubts. He did instead a finer and a nobler thing. He laid those doubts at Jesus' feet in one of the most pathetic questions that ever broke from the great soul of a mere man in its hour of darkness: "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?"

Who asks that question? The man who had declared: "There cometh One after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unl~~oose~~." The man, who down in the Jordan Valley had pointed one day to a silent stranger and said: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." This is the man who in the bitterness of his soul now asks: "Art Thou He that should come--Art Thou He?"

Moreover, Jesus did not give what the lawyers call a categorical reply. He did not answer "Yes, I am the Christ. Go back and tell John not to worry about these matters any more." That this was not the best way to deal with this doubter is clearly proven by the fact that Jesus did not follow a course so easy and so simple. Instead of this, he kept the messengers near him through the long day, and when the evening drew on, He called them to His side and said: "Go and show John those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not stumble at Me." (Matt. XI:4-6).

Since even those who challenge His highest claims yet acclaim Him as the Supreme Teacher of the ages, His judgment in the premises should be conclusive. In His great message to John, we have his own summing up of the evidence in the case. His miracles and His teachings, inseparably linked and interlocked, are our Lord's immortal answer to doubt, and He refers five times to His miracles and once to His teaching. To every one who with open mind and heart seeks the truth, they prove Him to be the Christ. But you can not prove anything--not even that the sun is shining--to the man who shuts his eyes and refuses to look. And John, away in his lonely "donjon keep," in memory or in fact, turns the pages of his Old Testament, and looking anew into the great portrait gallery of the past, exclaims: "Yes, this is He of whom Moses and the Prophets did speak--The Son of David, the Son of Mary, the Son of God."

That we may know that Christ's answer went home and that the mists of doubt were rolled away and that at even-

tide the golden light of peace flooded the soul of the great Forerunner, hear the Master saying to the multitude as the footfalls of the messengers grow faint: "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." (Matt. 11:11)

With this we pass from the high noon of Christ's yesterday to its eventide.

His supernatural birth, his lofty teachings, his mighty works could not atone for sin. They merely paved the way. They were the great steps leading up to that supreme event.

He who lived to serve must die to save men, for "without shedding of blood, there is no remission." Without the outpouring of a life that is beyond all price in the room of lives forfeited by sin, there can be no at-one-ment. For though hand join in hand, sin shall not go unpunished. Therefore He who came to save must bear our sins in His own body on the tree. He must be wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace must be upon Him, and with His stripes are we healed, as the Lord doth lay upon Him the iniquity of us all. On Calvary's Cross, "He that is called Jesus" paid the ransom-price for sinners when he "offered up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God," and with the victorious shout, "It is finished," His redemptive work is done.

But further. He who died for our sins must live again to prove his right to die. He who would bring life and immortality to light must himself first triumph over death and the grave. For "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (I Cor. 15:17). Hence on the third day he burst the bands of death. He shattered the shackles of the tomb, because it was not possible for the Lord of Life to be holden of them, and "leading captivity captive," He brought the gift of life eternal to a sin-wrecked world.

After forty never-to-be-forgotten days, during which many times and in varied ways He showed himself to those who knew Him best, He passed upward to His throne at the Father's right hand where he ever-liveth to make intercession for us.

Thus about four words, the history of Jesus Christ's earthly yesterday revolves. Mark them well. The Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. Or in simpler phase a Manger, a Cross, a Tomb, a Chariot of Cloud. Upon these He stands four-square to every wind that blows.

This is the Jesus Christ of yesterday.

What of the Christ for today--and tomorrow?

That four-fold picture upon which we have been looking is gray with age. Nearly twenty centuries have come and gone since it found a place upon the fadeless canvas. Have we grown beyond that picture? Does the answer spring from your heart today that leaped to the lips of Simon Peter in the long ago--glad, living, loving: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Can the Christ of the First Century satisfy the mind and heart of the Twentieth Century? Or must we recast our Gospels, and retouch the great portrait the early masters have drawn?

Two answers have been given.

Christ answers: "Before Abraham was, I am"--"the same yesterday and today and forever." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." "No man"--in any age or land--"No man cometh unto the Father but by Me!"

A Changeless Christ for a changeful world!

But others say: "The world has outgrown the Bible, the Cross, and the Tomb. The modern mind cannot accept beliefs that it considers outworn." Hence they attempt to give us something new and better.

A better Christ than He into whose face John looked in the Upper Room as he asked the plaintive question: "Lord, is it I that shall betray Thee?" A better Christ than He at whose feet Saul of Tarsus fell prostrate on the Damascus road and cried aloud: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" A better Christ than Timothy preached within the very shadow of Diana's magnificent temple? A better Christ than was preached by these and other men of like faith and spirit--men of giant stature who stand astride the centuries "and rule our spirits from their urns?" The very question carries its own stern rebuke.

Moreover, when they attempt to fashion their new Christ, they remind us of nothing quite so much as a lad of six, with brush and colors, blithely assuming to better the work of a Raphael or a Michelangelo. And when their work of "betterment" is ended we look in vain for a Cross that has not been emptied of its meaning, for a visage marred, a hand rent and bleeding, and a heart broken for sin. We strain our ears in vain for one note of that mighty voice that broke the slumbers of the tomb.

These men of mind so very modern talk largely and learnedly of the need for progressive up-to-date thinking, while yet their own thought as to the supernatural has about it a strangely musty smell. The odor of intellectual moth-balls is there. They are saying in this good year of grace the very same things the Sadducees were saying when the angels sang their glory song above the manger at Bethlehem--and the angels went right on singing, despite the modern mind.

It seems to them a thing incredible that God should raise the dead. But so was it with the men of Athens when Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and pointed them to the risen Jesus as the only hope of a sinning, perishing world--but the Man of Tarsus went right on preaching Christ crucified and risen, despite the modern mind.

They tell us that thinking men today can no longer believe in an Inspired Book, and in a Divine Christ who walked among men. Yet nineteen hundred years ago men of the same intellectual breed were asking with the same air of lofty scorn: "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees ("The intellectuals" of that day) believed on Him?" But the voice that long ago cried into the brooding darkness, "Let there be light" and there was light, makes answer still: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36).

Out of Ephesus comes a ringing echo of that voice: "This is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith. Who is he that overcometh but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (I. John 5:4-5.)

Thus when we lift the lion's skin that covers this awesome thing that calls itself "the modern mind," we find it is anything but modern and in its handling of the eternal verities is not conspicuous for the force or clearness of its mental grasp. It is indeed just an old foe with a new face. Its name is Unbelief; its battlecry: "We will not have this man to reign over us." "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the preaching of foolishness to save them that believe . . . Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men . . . God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty." (I Cor. 1:21-27.)

But happily much learning hath not made all men mad. A great host of able and scholarly men hold fast to the Old Faith and are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. The old, old story learned at their mother's knee is to them ever new and grandly true.

Lord Kelvin (William Thomson, 1824-1907), foremost among the men of science of the last century, was asked in the evening of his life: "What is your greatest discovery?" Standing on the border line of the twentieth century, he replied: "The greatest discovery I have ever made is the discovery of Jesus Christ as the Savior of sinners." When he detected symptoms of sceptical thinking among his students at Glasgow University, he would rebuke them, firmly yet kindly, after this fashion: "Don't tell me, young gentlemen, that the inspired records and the facts as to the Christ do not satisfy your intellects. Facts that satisfied the mind and heart of Saul of Tarsus, of Augustine, of Calvin, of Knox and Newton may well satisfy you. The trouble is not with the greatness of your intellectual powers but with the largeness of your intellectual pride."

Kelvin's great comrade in the realm of science, Michael Faraday (1791-1867), whose voice always commanded instant attention, was asked as he neared the end: "What are your speculations now, Faraday?" He replied: "Speculations? I have none. I rest on certainties. 'I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.'"

Gladstone, England's Grand Old Man, wrote (the sentence is graven on the Bronze Tablet in old Hawarden Church): "All I write, all I think, all I hope, is based upon the divinity of our Lord, the one central hope of our poor wayward race."

Dr. Howard A. Kelly, one of the great outstanding figures in the medical world, and a devout believer, says: "I have never in my whole life met a man who really knew the Bible, who rejected it. The difficulty has always been an unwillingness to give it an honest trial I was early struck with the wording of John 7:17: 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' Now the Bible does work, and it does just what it promises to do--transforms life--for all sinners it has a deep and abiding meaning."

Perhaps the most brilliant intellect America has produced drifted into Atheism, but God led him back out of the shadows into the light of a humble and contrite trust. Consider his Confession of Faith: "I would not give up my slender

portion of the price paid for our redemption--I would not exchange my little portion in the Son of David, for the power and glory of the Parthian, or of the Roman Empire--not for all with which the enemy tempted the Savior of Man." Hear him as he speaks elsewhere of God's great Book: "I was reared by a pious mother (who died when I was a mere lad). She taught me the Christian Religion in all its requirements. But Alas! I grew up an infidel. When I became a man, I resolved to examine for myself--I bought that Bible; I pored over it; I examined it carefully. I sought and procured those books for and against it; and when my labors were ended I came to this irresistible conclusion: the Bible is true. It would have been as impossible for a mole to have written Sir Isaac Newton's treatise on Optics as for the uninspired men to have written the Bible."

Yes, the Bible is true! It has been bitterly assaulted and from every possible angle. Many a hammer has been lifted against it. Fierce and fast the blows have fallen. But the hammers lie twisted and broken. Others now noisily busy will follow in their train. Yet the Anvil stands. "Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven." (Ps. 119:89).

"We search the world for truth; we cull
The good, the pure, the beautiful,
From graven stone and written scroll,
From all old flower fields of the soul;
And, weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from the quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the Book our Mothers read."

On the pages of that "Book our mothers read" is drawn in lines of living, loving, lasting light the face of Jesus Christ--"The brightness of the father's glory and the express image of his person"--the same yesterday and today and forever.

And tomorrow? Yes, the morrow cometh and with it a throne, a crown, a pierced hand in blessing uplifted, a smile that lights the universe, and a voice that echoes through the ages, rich and mellow as the note of old cathedral bells: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25:34).

"What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" "These are they which came up out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light

on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. 7: 13-17).

Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift: My Jesus --my Savior--my King--my unforgetting Friend--the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

THE ESSENTIAL CHRIST

Matt. 16:22-23 - "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: This shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: Thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Our Lord is at Caesarea-Philippi, far to the northward, at the sources of the Jordan. He is not here by accident. He does not just happen to be here. He has come hither with a very definite intent. He has drawn his disciples away from the thronging jostling multitude about the Sea of Galilee to the relative quiet of this spot, that he may reveal to them more clearly and completely than he has yet done the dark and tragic fate that lies just a few brief months ahead. He must go unto Jerusalem, and must suffer many things of the Elders, and chief priests, and scribes. He must be betrayed to the gentiles. He must be killed and be raised again the third day. "Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying 'This be far from thee, Lord. This shall not be unto thee'."

It was, indeed, a startling announcement, and one that fairly staggered him. That Israel's Messiah should be cut off when he seemed to be just across the threshold of his great mission to the earth, was to him altogether unthinkable. If he were taken, who then could break the irksome yoke of Rome, and driving out this hated conqueror, should ascend the throne of David, and taking again the sceptre long disused, should reign over a regenerated Israel and gradually extend his sway over the whole wide world. Clearly, Peter and his comrades had utterly forgotten the Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah -- that "golden passionale" -- which lies at the throbbing heart of all Messianic prophecy and promise, as it tells in ringing syllables of One "despised and rejected of men . . . wounded for our transgressions; bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. . . All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one unto his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all . . . He hath poured out his soul unto death . . . and he bare the sin of many!"

But the Apostles all expected a Crown without a Cross. Victory without suffering: a Throne without the throes of Gethsemane and Golgotha, -- and they drew back in horror from the very suggestion of a cross for the Christ.

Moreover, Peter felt that Jesus was in a strangely discouraged and despondent mood and was placing too little con-

fidence in the loyalty of the disciples themselves, who with true hearts and strong arms would gather about him, and calling the nation to their aid, would effectually guard him against every foe and against all possible failure. Therefore, he said: "This be far from thee, Lord: This shall not be unto thee."

Yet the searching eye of the Master saw that of which even Peter was as yet unaware. Behind the familiar accents of Peter's voice, he saw the subtle hand of Satan adroitly using this disciple as the unconscious instrument of his own dastard and deadly purpose. Hence the Christ, looking searchingly upon the disciples for a moment that he might fix their attention upon his words, proceeds to administer to Peter the most scathing and scorching rebuke ever spoken to a true disciple: "Get thee behind me, Satan; Thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

On only one other occasion is he recorded as administering a similar rebuke. This is but the echo of that, for while differing outwardly the occasions are in their essence the same.

On a mountain top in far Judea, two figures are seen silhouetted against the morning sky. The one is a young Galilean--a youth as yet to fortune and to fame unknown--an utter stranger to scenes of earthly splendor and ambition and power. The other is the sinister enemy of God and all that is good. He is plying the Son of Mary with many cunning and powerful temptations, seeking thus to turn him from his great redemptive purpose. And then as the climax of it all, he seeks to sweep him from his feet with one swift and dazzling panorama of all the Kingdoms of the World and the glory of them, the while he whispers: "All these will I give thee, and the glory of them, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." In effect he is saying: I know why you have come to earth. I know also that your triumph is sure, for the plans of God can not fail. But the method you have chosen is too slow and painful. It is humiliating and unworthy of the Son of God that, in his human person, he be nailed to the cross of shame and agony. Let me show you an easier and a better way. Just kneel for one little moment here upon the mountain top and acknowledge my greatness and power, and I, the chief obstacle to your success, will be satisfied and will retire forever from the field; and you, unhindered, can then mount at a bound the steps of your universal throne. But Jesus is not deceived. Instantly penetrating the disguises of the Tempter, he sternly thrusts him aside with the words: "Get thee behind me, Satan. For it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Mark this:-Satan's endeavor at the first was to keep Christ from the Cross.

He would draw him aside unaware from the straight and narrow way by which alone he could open wide the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. He would lure him from the one path along which human redemption could be won. Had he succeeded, his victory would have been complete from his own view point, and completely disastrous from the point of view of man, for the doom that rests upon a world justly condemned for its sins would have remained forever unlifted.

You may recall the story of the Big Bertha in the World War--the giant gun fashioned by German skill and designed by them to carry their message of "frightfulness" to all their foes, and to wreck, ruin and destruction at a distance of sixty or seventy miles. This mighty engine of death was aimed not at the trenches, where armed men stood in serried ranks, ready to thrust back the ruthless invaders of the soil of France. It was aimed, over the heads of the fighting men, at Paris many miles to the rear, and did in fact scatter alarm and death within its gates. For Paris was the heart of France, and if the heart of France could be broken, its armies would rapidly dissolve and the war be won.

And so on the mountain top, and later in Gethsemane, and here at Caesarea-Philippi through the agency of Simon Peter, he seeks by every subtle means in his power to keep Christ from the cross, for the Cross is the very heart and core of the Gospel. This gone, our preaching becomes a mere "sounding brass or a tinkling oymbal."

But he failed completely, thank God. And failing in this, his effort ever since has been to keep men from the Christ on the Cross.

Moreover, if he can use as his instrument in this deadly purpose a professed follower of the Christ, as he used Peter here, he is just so much the better pleased. Now and again you hear a professed Christian say: I am sure the heathen will not be lost. God will find some way to save them. Or someone says: Why send the Gospel to China or India? They have their own religions and are content with them; why disturb them with something new and strange? And from the lips of the Savior comes again the scathing rebuke: "Get thee behind me, Satan: Thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." For if a Chinaman can be saved without Christ, then a Carolinian can be so saved. If an Asiatic or an African can be saved without Christ, then an American can be so saved

and we make the Cross without effect, and Christ will have died in vain.

So all those who oppose the true Gospel today are "the enemies of the Cross of Christ." Phil. 3:18. Those who deny the supernatural in our religion and would eliminate every element of the miraculous are one with those who would assume to measure the heavens with a yardstick, or gather up the ocean in the teacup of human reason. They smile with a superior air, or speak with lofty disdain, of the Virgin Birth, and would empty the Cross and the Tomb of their meaning and their message for a sin-wrecked world. With a note of enthusiasm, they proclaim our Lord to be the noblest of men and the grandest of teachers--better far than Confucius and greater than Socrates--but still an exceptionally great teacher and an extraordinarily good man--and no more. They forget that unless he is infinitely more than this, he is at best a misguided enthusiast, and at worst, a deliberate Deceiver. They forget that unless he died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures, he is a bald imposter; and we, who believe in him, being left without a Savior, and without hope, "are of all men most miserable."

Yet there are men today, some of them pastors of great rich churches, and through the radio holding the ear of uncounted thousands, who with one hand lay at his feet the choicest flowers of human rhetoric, and with the other hand would lift the Crown from his brow and shatter it into a hundred bits at our feet. As we listen to their cultured tones, and go behind their smooth-sounding phrases, we are ready to say with Mary in the garden: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him," while from the lips of our risen Master, there comes again the scathing rebuke of those who wear his livery and betray his truth: "Get thee behind me, Satan: Thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

But we, stewards of the mysteries of his grace divine, hark back to the divine prescription as true in the twentieth century as in the first, and as urgently needed now as then. "We preach Christ crucified: unto the Jews, a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks, foolishness; but unto them which are called . . . Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (I Cor. 1:23-24).

But there are those who will say--they are quite numerous in our day, and speak with a good measure of plausibility: The world has changed greatly in nineteen hundred years; man

has developed, and the horizon of his knowledge has widened in so many ways, that we have outgrown the faith of our fathers. The Cross and the Tomb have lost much, if not all, of their meaning for this highly enlightened and scientific age.

Yes, the world has changed in many ways. It has journeyed far and suffered much since that dread night in Gethsemane and that darker day on Calvary's hill. But it has never traveled one inch beyond its age-old cry for a Redeemer --its unchanged need for the changeless Christ.

We have learned many things, and have learned to do many things--or to do old things in a way immeasurably better than anything of which our fathers ever dreamed. Invention and discovery have marked the progress of the world at every step; but man has never invented a cure for sin; or discovered a path that leads from earth to heaven except through him who long ago proclaimed: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Mr. Henry Watterson, familiarly known as "Marse Henry," was easily one of the ablest of American editors--possibly in his prime, the greatest of them all. In his autobiography he speaks of his early religious influences, and especially of the impressions produced at the annual summer camp--meetings in Tennessee, which he always attended; and of the Gospel hymns there learned, and which he could still repeat, or sing, late in life, though not without a break in the voice, so powerful was their hold upon his heart. As he grew older, he read widely. He studied the works of Renan and Huxley as well as later writers of the same school, and then records this as the fixed conviction of mind and heart: "I have found nothing to shake my childlike faith in the simple rescript of Christ and him crucified."

But changes there have been--many and far-reaching. Progress has been amazingly great. Let us glance rapidly at some of these changes. It is a far cry from the old flint and steel through the parlor match to the electric light. You can touch a button and instantly flood a great room with light, turning night into day. It is a far cry from the verbal message, or the letter sent by hand, to the telegraph, the telephone and the radio. It required six days to send the news of Yorktown to the Congress in Philadelphia, and yet not very long ago a man seated in a luxurious apartment in New York conversed with Admiral Byrd on the ice-pack at the southern rim of the planet. It is a far cry from foot-travel through the stage-coach to the railroad and automobile and airplane. It is a far cry from the rude junk that still sails along the coasts and up the rivers of the Orient to

the Queen Mary or the Normandie; or from the clumsy trireme with which Rome partly won and long held the coastlands of the Mediterranean, through "Old Ironsides" and the Merrimac, to the Bismarck and the North Carolina and the Missouri.

Marvelous changes these! Tremendous development all along the line.

Yet we must keep this fact clearly in mind. All of these changes, numerous and startling as they are, relate to externals and not to fundamentals. They describe our methods of doing the same things that Abraham or David or Caesar or Napoleon did in far cruder fashion. They relate, in other words, to modes of living, and not in any wise to the essential facts of life itself. The great fundamental facts of life, and the great fundamental forces of nature have not altered one iota. The sun rises and sets just as it did in that golden dawn when "the morning stars sang together and all the Sons of God shouted for joy." The seasons come and go, winter followed by spring, then summer, then autumn, just as it was at the beginning. Trees bud and blossom, and yield their fruit, and cast their leaves, as they did "amid Eden's garden bloom." The tides of ocean rise and run as at the first, and none can stay its course when "that which drew from out the boundless deep, turns again home." Earthquake, tornado, volcano break as of old with devastating force, and utterly defy the skill and power of man to prevent or to control them.

The laws of gravitation operate just as they always have done. The apple loosed from its branch falls to the ground just as it did when Newton watched, or as it might have done when the Mother of all living put forth her hand and plucked "the fruit of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe." Moreover, if you walk off the roof of a ten-story building, or over the edge of a lofty cliff, your body will be mangled and your life crushed out just as surely as if Dr. Einstein had not been born.

So also with our physical needs. They are as unchanged and changeless as the everlasting hills. We require food, water, sleep, just as inescapably as did the first human pair who stood with bowed heads and broken hearts outside of Eden's fast-closed gates. Without food, your body will shrivel and die. If you are adrift at sea without fresh water, consuming thirst will turn you into a raving maniac. If sleep forsakes your pillow too long, reason will be dethroned, and you may need to be placed in a padded cell.

What is true in the world of nature, what is true of our physical being, is equally and inescapably true in the realm of the spirit. Man's need of God knows no change. "O God, thou hast made us for thyself, and our souls are restless till they rest in thee," the great Augustine cried centuries ago. "My soul longeth, yea even fainteth, for God. My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God," sang the sweet singer of Israel a thousand years before the Christ came to earth. Yes, our souls are sick with sorrow and with sin until the Great Physician comes and lays his healing hand upon us as he answers with gentle accent: "I will, be thou clean." Unsatisfied with the best the world has to offer, we hunger and thirst for something better until we hear his ringing promise: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger: and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John 6:35). We weary still, as all our fathers did, until we catch the notes of a majestic voice borne across the ages from the hills of far Judea, sweet and gentle as the South Wind breathing upon a bank of violets: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matt. 11:28-29).

Guilty, earth-stained, sin-scarred, we shrink away and fear to come, until we hear again the blessed invitation, in accents low and tender: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. 1:18).

All of this promised life and pardon and power and peace are inseparably bound up in the Cross and the Tomb--the things from which Peter blindly sought to turn our Lord aside with the words: "This be far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee."

Beloved: This may be my last meeting with some of you. Standing then, in the midst of a seething, restless, questioning world, I would urge you to take as your Divine Savior, your Almighty Friend, your unfailing Guide, the changeless Christ who is the same yesterday, today and forever. There is none other name under Heaven whereby you can be saved. Yield yourself to him with glad and full-hearted faith. He will never leave and never forsake those who put their trust in him. Without him, your life is fatally incomplete. Apart from him, you fail utterly of God's intent. Then come to Christ today.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Matthew 28:6. "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

The Keystone of the Gospel Arch is the Resurrection of Christ. It is to a review of the evidence upon which rests our belief in this pivotal event of all history that I am directing your attention now. The late Senator Davis, of Michigan, a member of the commission which drew up the treaty of peace after the Spanish-American War, declared that as he followed the course of history back through the centuries, he found that near the beginning of the first century of the Christian Era something vital and decisive happened that moulded the history of the afteryears, and investigation proved beyond question that that something "was nothing less than the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

For the sake of convenience and of greater clearness, the evidence upon which our belief in this supreme fact is based may be arranged under three heads.

First, we have the strong Presumption of its truth.

Every thoughtful reader of the Old Testament Scriptures has observed the long line of prophecy, running like a golden thread from Genesis to Malachi, which points to the coming of a Great Deliverer. From the initial promise spoken at Eden's gates to "the seed of the woman," these prophecies grow in light and clearness until under David, and those who come after him, they take definite shape as a King of the royal line of David, whose dominion shall extend from sea to sea, and under whose righteous sway every nation and kindred and tongue shall eventually be brought.

Yet, while the exalted nature of this Messiah is everywhere emphasized, only once is it distinctly said that he should be buried and rise again from the dead--though this fact is indirectly shadowed forth in other places. In Psalm 16:10, David says: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol (the place of disembodied spirits), neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." In this Psalm, David declares his confidence in God's good providence over him both in this life and in that which is to come. Probably also he here declares his belief in his own physical resurrection, though this is not clear. Yet this can not exhaust the meaning of the passage. It can find its complete fulfilment only in David's greater Son, as the application made of it in the New Testament established beyond question.

Peter, speaking at Pentecost, under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:25-31), applies this passage to the Resurrection of Christ. As all the Jews well knew, David was dead and buried, in proof of which his sepulchre was with them still. Continuing, he declares: "Therefore, being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, Spake of the Resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in Sheol, neither his flesh did see corruption." Paul, speaking later at Antioch in the heart of Asia Minor (Acts 13:35-37), quotes this passage to precisely the same effect: "For David was laid unto his fathers and saw corruption, but he whom God raised up saw no corruption."

But while this is the only clear-cut prophecy of the Resurrection in the Old Testament, it must be understood by good, and indeed necessary, inference from all those passages which speak of the great sufferings of the Messiah and of the glory that shall follow. In Isaiah 53, He is described as "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed . . . the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all . . . for the transgression of my people was he stricken . . . his grave was appointed to be with the wicked but with the rich man was his tomb." Yet immediately after, the prophet breaks out in exultant prediction of the mighty conquests which this Great Sufferer should thereafter achieve.

We have yet stronger presumptive evidence in Christ's oft-repeated prediction that He would be slain and would rise again from the dead. Upon not less than six separate occasions is He recorded as predicting His own resurrection after His enemies have done their worst upon Him (Matt. 12:38-40; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:30; Luke 24:6-7; 24:25-27). In three instances, He even stakes the proof of His Messiahship upon His rising again on the third day (Luke 24:25-27; 24:45-46; Matt. 12:38-42).

These things are not of themselves complete and conclusive proof, yet the word of Him who had never failed to accomplish even those things confessedly beyond all human power awakens strong anticipation that this also will not fail. By the word of His power the dead were raised up, the lepers were cleansed, every form of disease was instantly healed, and the raging tempest of the sea was stilled.

These give us a presumption amounting almost, if not quite, to a certainty that nothing is beyond His power.

But we are not required to rest content with evidence like this, remarkable though it is. This presumption is merely the stepping stone which leads us to solid ground.

Next we have PROOF--The Empty Tomb.

"He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

That Christ was dead, there can be no doubt. The rough soldiers who came to take Him down from the Cross found that He was already dead, and so they broke not his legs to hasten death as they did those of the malefactors that were crucified with Him. Yet to "make assurance doubly sure," and so prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that this was not a mere swoon or fainting spell, one of these legionnaires thrust his spear into His side and "forthwith came there out blood and water"--thus making the continuance of life impossible.

That He was buried, and that the place of His burial was perfectly known both to His friends and to His enemies, is no less certain. For at the request of the Jews and by command of the Roman Governor, the body was taken down from the Cross that it might be buried before the Jewish Sabbath, which was now at hand. With the Governor's consent, Joseph of Arimathea took charge of the dead body of Jesus. Then he and Nicodemus embalmed it, and wound it in linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb in Joseph's garden and they rolled a great stone against the entrance and took their departure. Here then is a tomb known to contain the body of Jesus of Galilee, and on the third day thereafter, it is admitted by all to be empty. How came it so? This is the fact that needs to be explained, and only one of two explanations is possible--either the body was stolen, or else Christ Jesus rose from the dead.

The Apostle John tells us (19:38-42) that Nicodemus came also to share in this last tender ministry to a secret friend. He brought with him a hundred pounds of spices with which to anoint for his last long sleep the body of his dead friend. Both of these men had been timid disciples before, but now both came out boldly and aligned themselves with Him at a time when even the Apostles, with the probable exception of John, had fled and gone into hiding. These spices which Nicodemus brought, myrrh and aloes, were gummy substances used in embalming the dead, and so preventing putrefaction. The body thus prepared was laid in Joseph's new tomb, hewn out of the rock, and a great stone was rolled against the otherwise narrow open entrance. Of this, John and also certain women were eye-witnesses (Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55; John 19:35).

But this was not all. His enemies strangely enough remembered that He had said that He would rise again. Hence to prevent the body from being stolen, they requested the Governor to seal the tomb and to appoint a guard of soldiers to keep it. This was done, and the sepulchre was made sure.

Yet, despite the stone, the seal, and the Roman guard, the tomb was empty on the morning of the third day, and those who came at the dawn, not to greet the risen Jesus, but to do honor to the body of the dead Christ, found Him not. But they found the stone rolled away, and the linen cloths lying within, and the napkin that had been about his head carefully folded and laid in a place by itself--this last a simple act and fact yet one of tremendous significance. Not thus are thieves wont to do their work. Here was no evidence of haste or fright, but the unmistakable marks of orderly, deliberate movement. With an armed guard just at hand, would "body-snatchers" multiply the chances of capture by stopping to undo a body thus securely wrapped, and even fold one of these garments and lay it in a place by itself?

No rational motive for this unwrapping, under the attendant circumstances, can be assigned. It would have been far more easy, and immeasurably more safe, for them to carry the body as it was, and thus dispatch their work quickly and make their escape, leaving behind no trace of what they had done.

The Roman guard, who saw what happened, and were full of terror because of what they had seen, had no thought that the body had been stolen. This was a clumsy after-thought--a shallow falsehood--invented by the Jewish rulers, and which, by means of heavy bribes, they induced the soldiers to tell instead of what they had actually witnessed. The shallowness of all this is easily seen, for if asleep they could not have known that the disciples, or any one else, had stolen the body. The testimony of a sleeper is nothing worth. Moreover to sleep on duty is one of the worst offenses of which a soldier can be guilty, and, if discovered, means certain death in many armies even in this softer age. But the discipline of Rome knew no mercy, and hence a Roman soldier would have been the last man on earth to confess voluntarily this fatal breach of duty; and had it been true, the chief priests and elders would have been the first to make clamorous and insistent demand that they be put to death for their criminal neglect.

Truly, that cause is desperate indeed which begins with murder, and ends with bribery and falsehood.

Clearly, then the body of Jesus could not have been stolen. This would require the impossible assumption, to sum up the case briefly, that an official and imperial seal could be broken; a great stone barring the entrance to the tomb be rolled away; a carefully embalmed body be tediously unwrapped and separated noisily from the sticky embalming substance; these cloths arranged in an orderly manner within the tomb; and then the body carried out under the very eyes of a band of soldiers detailed for the express purpose of preventing this very thing.

Moreover, what rational explanation for its removal could be assigned? The body lay in friendly ground. It had been tenderly prepared for burial, and laid away by loving hands with tears and grief profound. What could be gained by stealing the body? The cause of Christ could live in fact alone--not deception. Nor would men have dared suffering, prison and death simply to disseminate a deliberate and conscious falsehood.

Here, then, we have a chain of evidence so closely knit that no court on earth could refuse to accept it--for if this body was not stolen, there is no other alternative but that Jesus "rose from the dead according to the Scriptures."

But when we add the further fact that He was seen by, and talked with and ate with, witnesses whose credibility can not be fairly questioned, Proof rises to the level of absolute Demonstration.

Our minds are so constituted that we can not refuse assent to testimony that is properly attested. A man of proven integrity, of sound mind and discretion, who bears witness to a fact that is fairly within his knowledge, when there is no reasonable ground for supposing that he has been deceived, forces upon us the conviction that he speaks the truth. Such is the nature of the testimony which we are now to consider.

Here again God has supplied us with evidence so abundant that all rational doubt is excluded. We are not confined to a single witness, or to a solitary appearance, but can appeal to a great number of witnesses who saw Him on many different occasions, and under widely different conditions. Not less than eleven times did Christ appear to His disciples and in a manner which finally carried full conviction even to the minds of the most sceptical. Moreover, He appeared to them in numbers extending all the way from one to above five hundred persons at once. On a twelfth occasion, He appeared to Saul of Tarsus "as to one born out of due time" (Acts 9:3-8; I. Cor. 15:8).

These are of definite record, viz: (1) to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9-10; John 20:14); (2) to the women (Matt. 28:9-10); (3) to Peter (Luke 24:34; I Cor. 15:2); (4) to two on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13); (5) to Apostles in the Upper Room (John 20:19); (6) to same (John 20:26,29); (7) to seven at Sea of Galilee (John 21:14); (8) to eleven on Mountain (Matt. 28:16); (9) to "above five hundred" (I. Cor. 15:6); (10) to James (I. Cor. 15:7); (11) to all Apostles on Olivet at Ascension (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:6-11).

Three times it is recorded that they touched Him (Matt. 28:9; Luke 24:39; John 20:27). Twice we are told He ate with them (Luke 24:42; John 21:12-13), and always it is either stated, or to be inferred, that He talked with them.

We have not space to review all these appearances, nor is it necessary to do so. Let us be content with a brief reference to the two appearances to the Apostles in the Upper Room.

On the evening of the Resurrection Day, Jesus stood suddenly in their midst--Thomas being absent. Luke tells us they were swept with terror and thought they saw a ghost. But Christ calms their fears, and gives them tangible convincing proof that He is not a ghost, nor is this a mere phantasm of the brain, but that He is indeed the risen Jesus. "Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold, my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a ghost hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. When he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet . . . and . . . he did eat before them." (Luke 24:36-43).

On the following Sunday evening, He comes again, when Thomas also was present. He bids this doubting faithless disciple to reach hither his finger and behold His hands, and to reach hither his hand and thrust it into the gaping wound in His side, and be not faithless but believing. And as with the others, so also with Thomas, all his stubborn doubts vanished and he exclaimed: "My Lord and my God."

Christ, you observe does not appeal merely to the sense of hearing, for in that alone they might possibly have been deceived, but He appeals also to the powerful and unerring testimony of sight and touch. Sane men would not confound the unmistakable touch of flesh and bone with the elusive properties of a ghost. Matter and spirit can not be thus confused. Nor, after the first flush of astonishment and fright, would they mistake the familiar voice and the well-known features of Him with whom they had been in intimate fellowship

for the past three years, for the appearance of an unknown spirit; nor yet the fact of seeing Him eat food before their eyes for a vision of the mind.

These facts are of the utmost importance in connection with a prevalent form of disbelief in the Resurrection, called "The Vision Theory." The proponents of this wild theory, which in one form or another is taught in some of our schools today, say the Apostles were expecting a Resurrection. Their minds were in a state of such feverish excitement and anticipation that they mistook mental impressions for actual appearances.

To charge that the Apostles were thus self-deceived is to attribute to them a degree of imbecility that is utterly inconsistent with the calmness and majesty and power of the Gospel narratives, and with the mighty work which these men afterwards accomplished.

Moreover, the theory is without a shadow of foundation in fact. We search the records in vain for even the faintest evidence of feverish excitement. Not one of them approached the sepulchre until the third day, and then in mingled amazement and curiosity after word had been brought by the startled women that the tomb was empty. On the contrary, they had shut themselves up in a state of gloom, perplexity and utter hopelessness. In this state of brain and heart, could they have mistaken a mere shadow of the mind for the actual touch of flesh and bone? Can you stretch your hand in air and then persuade yourself that you have laid it upon the body of a friend? One who in all seriousness charged you with having done so would simply provoke your amusement, your anger, or your contempt.

But the number who witnessed these appearances of the risen Christ--more than five hundred at one time--precludes the idea of hallucination. It is simply inconceivable that more than five hundred men and women in the open air, with as many different temperaments, should at exactly the same time, be in exactly the same mental state, and imagine that they saw precisely the same mental image. Such unparalleled agreement of most unusual mental states among so great a number would be a miracle scarcely less strange than the actual appearance of the risen Jesus.

Moreover, those who accept this strange hypothesis must explain why there were only a limited number of these appearances, and why all took place within a brief and clearly marked period of time. There are recorded just eleven of these appearances to the original body of disciples, and

these all occurred within a definite period of forty days--beginning at a given time and ending at a given time. Why men and women in such a state of feverish excitement, as this theory presupposes, should have waited three days before they beheld any vision, and why at the end of forty days this extravagant mental state should suddenly and sharply cease, are facts which the critics quite wisely have not attempted to explain.

But beside all this, the whole theory rests upon an assumption that is in the very teeth of the real facts, viz., that the disciples expected a Resurrection. Every atom of evidence goes to show that this is the very thing they did not expect, and this fact gives greater force to their subsequent conviction, and to their full-hearted acceptance of the truth. It is true that the disciples had heard Christ predict that He would be crucified and would rise again, but they understood not. They gave to His words some figurative meaning, which to them was not clear. They were Jews and like the rest of their nation, held erroneous views as to what their Messiah was to be. They regarded Him as a mighty prince who would establish a world-kingdom, and so every reference to His humiliation they interpreted in a highly symbolic sense. In the ninth chapter of Mark, it is stated that "they questioned one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." In the preceding chapter, we are told that when Christ spoke of His death and resurrection, "Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying: 'This be far from thee, Lord;-this shall not be unto thee.'" The devout women who came early to the tomb came not to greet the risen Lord but to perform a last loving ministry to their dead friend by preparing anew His body for its last long sleep. They even wondered how they should reach the dead: "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" (Mark 16:1-3). Surely there is no glint of an expected resurrection here.

The two disciples who walked with sad hearts toward Emmaus on Sunday afternoon voiced their shattered hopes in these plaintive words as they thought of the Crucified One: "But we trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21). Their hope of a conquering Messiah was locked in the tomb with the dead Christ.

Thomas came into the upper room after Jesus had come and gone on that first Sunday evening, and his brethren told him: "We have seen the Lord." But Thomas answered: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." The very antithesis of an expectation that Christ would rise!

Thus the record shows that not one of the disciples expected His resurrection, and even that some of the women that believed, with characteristic love and fidelity, had gone to the grave to anoint anew His body with rich spices on the very morning that He rose from the dead.

From Friday to Sunday they were plunged into utter gloom and hopelessness, disheartened and despairing, mourning over the wreck of their bright hopes which they believed to be buried in the tomb in Joseph's garden. When the report of the Resurrection came they received it with incredulity and refused to believe until they had actually seen and touched and talked with Him. It was this disbelief rising at last into assured conviction which suddenly transformed this company of timid, disheartened disciples into a band of bold and fearless preachers of Christ and his Resurrection, whom neither threats nor prison, persecution nor impending death, could turn from their self-devoted task. And when we turn to the Acts and the Epistles we find it was His crucifixion and resurrection, the crowning proofs of His Messiahship, that formed the keynote of all their preaching. This complete and wonderful transformation from utter despair to intense activity forced even the German rationalists, Paulus and Strauss, whose cold scepticism was seldom altered even by cold facts, to admit that "something extraordinary must have occurred."

With all its boasted wisdom and scholarship, this theory, vulnerable at every point, is the utmost that modern infidelity can advance in explanation of great facts too well attested to be flatly rejected even by it.

There is indeed an off-shoot of this infidel view that is widely current in some sections today--a rabid rationalism resident even in the Redeemer's church. Its proponents deny the supernatural elements of our glorious faith, and declare that while His body could not rise, they believe in a "spiritual resurrection." But spirit can not die, and therefore can not be restored to life, and hence a "spiritual resurrection" is no Resurrection at all, but merely a very shallow delusion and a snare--an irrational attempt to rationalize a supernatural Faith. It empties of its meaning the great declaration that: "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that he was seen (of many) . . . And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain . . . if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished . . . But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." (I. Cor. 15: 3-20).

Moreover, Saul of Tarsus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the followers of Jesus, is confronted in his mad career by the risen Christ, and from a relentless persecutor of the Christians becomes the foremost preacher of the Christ and of his Resurrection. Christianity can safely challenge the world to offer any adequate explanation of the conversion of a man of Paul's position and character and talents--acknowledged leader of his people, with nothing to gain and everything to lose if Christ were not all that His people claim for Him--except that Christ Jesus was indeed risen from the dead, and had appeared in person to him on the Damascus road.

There is another argument too weighty to be omitted in this review of the evidence, yet one which we can merely state in passing. It is the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week as a perpetual memorial of the fact that the Redeemer rose from the dead on that day. The Fourth of July commemorates the birth of a nation. It might have been observed by a few here and there in any case, but the day could never have obtained nation-wide recognition had not the event which it celebrates actually occurred. In the same way, Sunday could never have displaced the day which had been observed by God's people for at least four thousand years, and be universally recognized by the Church of the Living God, had not the event which it commemorates actually taken place.

This is a rapid outline of the main evidence upon which we base our belief in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, our divine Lord and Redeemer. It may safely be declared that we have "an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast"--that our faith rests upon a foundation that can never be moved.

Without the Resurrection, the Apostles must have lost all faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and would have gone back to Judaism, and thus Christianity would have died at its birth.

It is the cardinal fact of the Gospel, and the continued existence of Christianity in the world is itself a mighty, ever-present witness to its truth. It stands unshaken by the assaults of nineteen hundred years because its proof is over-whelming.

A brilliant lawyer, known in his prime the country over, and associated with some of the most notable judicial cases in our history, once said to me: "I have never won a case in court upon evidence so clear and conclusive as that which convinces me of the Resurrection of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

"It is," says the great Dr. Charles Hodge, "the best authenticated event in the history of the world."

The doctrinal and practical bearings of this subject are many and varied. I select but two, and these will be briefly stated.

First, I would remind you that our trust is not in a dead Christ, "Christ that died" is the beginning of the glorious Gospel of the Son of God. But we can not stop there. We rest secure only when we can add: "Yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. 8:34). Once, for our sakes, He permitted Himself to be mocked and buffeted and spitted upon and nailed to the accursed tree. Now He is raised "far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named," "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father." Oh, wondrous love! This exalted Prince condescends to be our Savior and our unforgetting Friend. "In his presence is fulness of joy; at his right hand, there are pleasures forevermore."

Again, Christ's Resurrection is the prophecy and pledge of our own. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul teaches that our hope for time and for eternity hinges upon this great fact. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. For if in this life alone we have hope we are of all men most miserable."

He died on Calvary's Cross for our sins. He rose again on the third day to prove His right to die, and so became "the first fruits of them that slept." (I. Cor. 15:17-19).

And so ye who mourn for loved ones whom you have laid beneath the sod, take courage. Thy loved ones shall rise again. If their lives are hid with Christ in God, then "beyond the smiling and the weeping," beyond that which mortals mean by death, they shall rise and reign with Him in endless day. For the risen Jesus proclaims: "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

SUFFERING AND GLORY

ROMANS 8: 18:-- "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton writes:-- "if we dig but deep enough, under all earth runs water, under all life runs grief!"

This is most true. It is indeed but the distant echo of that plaintive word that fell in broken accents from the lips of the stricken patriarch:

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not."--(Job 14: 1-2.)

For the great minor note in the music of earth is unmistakably a note of sadness. High above, and far beneath, the confused and clamant voices of business or of pleasure, there is borne upon the air the sharp and penetrating note of sorrow or of pain.

Hear the great Lawgiver as he pens what Lord Macaulay picturesquely calls:-- "That lofty and melancholy psalm." It is the Ninetieth Psalm--more familiar and more frequently heard throughout Christendom than any other in the Psalter, with the probable exception of the Twenty-third:

"We spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are three score years and ten; and if by reason of strength, they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."--(Ps. 90:9-10.)

Clearly, then, in this fleshly life, suffering, physical or mental, is everywhere. No life is permanently exempt. In some one or more of its many phases, it comes to all:--in pain of body or distress of mind; in the blasting of some cherished hope; or in the stress and strain of that dread hour when we are called to stand at the very edge of the Valley of the Shadow and bid farewell to one about whom the tendrils of the heart have entwined themselves with strong and lasting affection.

That one, or more, of these is the universal heritage of man, no one will seriously venture to deny, or ever to question.

But what is the explanation of this suffering to which all flesh is heir?

The Scriptures clearly teach that the ultimate cause of suffering is the presence of sin in the world. It is "man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste brought death into the world and all our woe." This is the poisoned fountain from which all sickness and suffering and sorrow spring. And because a state of sin exists that has left its deadly taint in every life, not a few have reasoned that each particular case of suffering is the direct and logical fruit of some special individual sin on the part of the sufferer. The greater the suffering, they argue, the greater the sin that preceded and produced it.

This, however, is utterly wrong in logic and in fact. It is directly contrary to the express teaching of our blessed Lord himself. Yet this error is deep-seated and wide spread. It was very common among the ancients. It is unhappily frequent among the sons of men even today.

This, by way of illustration, is the view of the friends of the old patriarch who came to him in his day of disaster great and of grief profound. Their shallow reasoning is:

"Inasmuch as our friend Job is now afflicted above most men, it can only be because he has sinned above most men. His tribulation is at once the product and the proof of his transgression."

And the Book of Job is God's patient, trenchant and majestic answer to this deeply rooted error.

Centuries later, even the disciples of our Lord so argued. In Jerusalem there was a man born blind. In more than forty years, he had never seen the golden light of the sun. But Jesus passed that way one day, and gave sight and healing to the man.

"And His disciples asked him, saying, 'Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?'--(John 9:2).

His blindness was, in their eyes, proof positive of antecedent guilt. Some hidden sin of the past was searching him out and voicing itself in the sufferings of the present.

But our Savior, placing the true explanation upon far higher ground, promptly and pointedly rebukes that view. So far as his blindness is concerned:

"Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."--(John 9:3.)

Indeed, as we ourselves often observe, some of the purest of God's saints have been the keenest sufferers. Many of the choicest of his servants--men and women who have lived so near the King that their very faces are radiant with "the beauty of holiness"--have been called to stand deep within the shadows, and to pass through the chill waters of sorrow and of pain.

And even the Lord of Glory, who "knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," in the fulfilment of His mission and His ministry, endured such measureless pain and shame and anguish as no other of the sons of earth has ever experienced, or even dreamed of.

So far, then, as the children of God are concerned (and to these alone does our text relate), it is not even remotely true that their suffering is at once the proof and measure of the sin that has marked their lives. Neither does it indicate that God is indifferent to their case. Nor yet that He has forgotten and forsaken them.

Both the Divine Christ and His inspired apostles sharply rebuke such thoughts as unworthy of God, and as strangely disloyal on the part of His children, and then they lift these experiences to the high plane of the divine plan and purpose. They reveal to us the great and consoling truth that suffering and sorrow are designed by an all-wise and all-loving Father for His children's highest good.

"All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose."--(Rom. 8:28.)

"For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth * * * Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby"--(Heb. 12:6-11.)

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."--(2 Cor. 4:17.)

Here, then, God has placed in our hands the key that unlocks the mystery of His providential dealings with His

children. The trials and losses, the afflictions and distresses that overtake us in this present life are disciplinary in their nature and in their purpose. They are designed to bring us into fuller conformity to His will, and so to make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Yet our weak natures--reluctant, fearful, appalled--shrink from these dark trials, even as we shrink from the touch of the surgeon's knife, yet are they most needful for us. Such experiences are never pleasing to the flesh. We do not desire them. We can not enjoy them. We dread the very thought of them. But God knows best, and in His unerring wisdom and unforgetting care, He sees that these things are essential to our spiritual upbuilding and our growth in grace.

Remember that, after all is said, we are but weak and erring sinners still, though sinners saved by Almighty grace. In our natures there remain the seeds and roots of evil, ready to spring up and contest most bitterly the possession of the soil. These elements of evil must be gradually uprooted. Passions must be controlled. Unholy thoughts and desires must be conquered. The carnal life must be brought into increasing subjection to that which is spiritual and eternal. Neither easily nor quickly can this great result be achieved. Indeed, by unaided human effort it can not be done at all. We must put forth our utmost strength; we must "agonize to enter in at the straight gate;" we must be ever watchful and alert; we must fight the good fight of faith, and strive to lay hold on eternal life. But above all, the great God our Savior must be our guide and helper. We must yield to His will, trust to His wisdom, rest in His love, and be kept by His power, for "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust."--(Ps. 103:14.)

Keep this central fact clearly in mind; the prize of our high calling is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ, our Divine Lord and Redeemer--"a crown of glory that fadeth not away"--and in order to be fitted for that magnificent reward, no disciplinary price that we may be called to pay can possibly be too great.

More than this. No great reward that is truly worth having can be won and held except at a great price. No possession that is of lasting value can be gained and kept except at a great cost.

Even the contestants in those ancient games--Olympic or Isthmian--were required to undergo long months of arduous training, involving great toil and self-denial, before they were qualified even to enter the race for a crown which, if won, perished with the getting.

That gallant seaman, Commander Richard Evelyn Byrd, did not make his brilliant dash to the Pole and back to Spitzbergen in just sixteen hours--terrific as the strain of those hours was. Through long years of hard work he had, with patient skill, equipped himself for his great adventure. To this he had added weary months of special preparation before the epoch-making flight began that won for him the high distinction of the foremost naval officer of the world.

In these times of startling change and achievement, the Klondike era seems like very ancient history. Yet easily within the memory of many of us is the time when the yellow metal was discovered there and the gold rush began. That wild region is remote from the habitations of men. It is separated by high mountains and vast plains from the centres of civilization, while, during a great part of the year both mountain and plain lie deep in ice and snow. Danger lurked along those trails. Suffering, exhaustion, death, stared men in the face at every turn. But at the end of the trail was gold, and gold is to most men the highest good. That coveted prize could not be won without the toil and the pain and the peril, and hence tens of thousands were ready to dare danger and death, and endure bitter and protracted privations in the hope that they might obtain the glittering reward.

Ah, friends, if the sons of earth lured by the mere hope of success--without its certainty--are ready, and even eager, thus to dare and endure that they may obtain a corruptible crown, shall the children of God refuse to toil and suffer in order that they may be fashioned for that "inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away?"

But more than this. Since even these lighter and more uncertain glories of earth, that often fail to be realized, or if gained, too often perish with the getting, can be had only at such vast cost, is it reasonable to expect that the fulness of that promised glory that passeth knowledge can be entered upon until through the discipline of trial and suffering we have been made meet therefor?

Yonder diamond that gleams and sparkles with such brilliant luster did not so come forth from the bosom of Mother Earth. When first drawn from its hiding place of many centuries, it was merely a rough, stained and unsightly stone, and showed slight trace of that wondrous beauty that the world so justly admires. Hence the rude stone must be passed through the lapidary's hand. Under his skilled eye it must be cut and chiselled and polished until each of its many facets is made to glow and flash as with the glory of the stars.

Some years ago, I chanced to be in the office of a friend, and he showed me, upon his desk, a little box of stones that he had picked up here and there upon his country place. Suspecting their hidden beauty, he had sent them to an expert to be tested. When they came back to him, one side of each stone was still untouched, and was as coarse and stained and unsightly as when first lifted from its earthen bed. But the other surface had been cut and ground and polished until all its elusive beauty was brought so clearly out as to surprise and delight the eye.

Here, then, is the two-fold illustration that we seek. First of all we have just the rough coarse stone--earth-stained, scarred, valueless--unfit for anything; and then the same stone after it has passed through the hands of a master-workman, and has felt the sharp strokes of the chisel and the grinder, transformed into a thing of beauty that may serve as a setting in ring or breastpin.

If, then, such rigid discipline as this, and such toilsome preparation, are necessary before even a rough and trifling stone is fitted for the highest place to which it can attain, how much more must it be true that these vessels of earth, at the beginning pure gold without alloy, but now marred and scarred and stained and broken, must be passed through the heated furnace of affliction, and be subjected to the skillful handling of the Great Craftsman, before they can be changed into glorious vessels meet for the palace of the great King. And in the afterward of years, when the work is complete and the end attained, how light will seem the toil and how slight the suffering and sacrifice through which we have passed. These all will shrink into nothingness before the radiant glory that shall follow.

Often, in days long gone, have I climbed the steep and rugged mountain path that like a serpent's track wound mile after mile upward to the lofty summit. The rough stones bruised my feet, the hot sun beat down upon me with wilting power, until wearied limb and muscle rebelled against further effort. The cliffs rose high and sharp on my right, and the deepening gorges fell sheer away on my left until one could no longer hear the rippling music of the brook as far below it fled downward to the sea, and all the while the path grew steeper and more difficult before me. Yet I could not give up or turn back. With more resolute effort I bent to the task, and pressed slowly onward and upward until at last the summit was reached. And then, while the cool breeze from off the everlasting hills kissed my cheek, and the blended beauty of mountain and valley and plain and sea broke upon my delighted view, I forgot the weariness and the toil

through which I had passed in the grandeur of the scene that filled and thrilled my soul.

Something near akin to this must have been in the Apostle's mind when he penned the glowing words of our text. He too had journeyed far and suffered much. And now this grand old servant of the King--this Veteran of the Cross--looks back along the winding, broken path over which he has come. He sees anew the hardships and the sacrifices that have crowded his way. He remembers the pain and the heartache. He pictures afresh the losses, the trials, the disappointments, the sufferings that have been his in overflowing measure. All this he vividly recalls. And then, turning away from these things, he lifts his eyes in wondering gratitude toward those vistas of splendor and of gladness that by God's grace are yet to be, and with triumphant voice exclaims:

"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

He does not say, mark you, that earth's sorrows shall not exceed the glory that shall follow. He does not claim that when, in the final reckoning, the good is set over against the evil, the balances will stand level. But he does declare, without question or reservation, that the very worst and most the world, the flesh and the devil can inflict upon God's servants here shrinks into insignificance before the dazzling splendor of the reward:

"For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him"--(I Cor. 2:9.)

This is the wondrous promise of His grace.

Children of the King, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if your heart is bowed beneath the weight of manifold trials, think of the waiting glory and your burdens will be lightened and lifted.

If, perchance, you mourn in the freshness of a grief that never grows old, think of those visions of splendor that break upon the view of the redeemed as they see their Savior face to face, and "let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Believer, ponder often and earnestly these great promises that God has graciously set before you in His blessed

Book that He might lift your heart above the passing and perishing things of earth and fix it upon the things that are unseen yet eternal.

How He would spur your laggard steps, how He would quicken and clarify and vitalize your earth-clogged thoughts, with the uplifting vision of a land hard by the River of Life, and that lies beyond the setting sun, where "God shall wipe away all tears * * * and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."--(Rev. 21:4).

Yes, in truth:--"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

SAFETY OF THE BELIEVER

I Peter 1:5

Kept By the Power of God

All of us instinctively reverence power. This is true of the young as well as of those who are older grown. The child seizes the Father's outstretched hand and looking up into his smiling face is sure that nothing is beyond his power and courage. The lad of from twelve to eighteen years looks upon the trained athlete, light of foot and lithe of limb, whose knotted muscles tell of vast reserves of strength and readily acclaims him his beau ideal of a man. For with the average lad muscle not mind is the measure of the man.

But we who are older grown are guilty of the same misjudgment. We look upon a Caesar or a Napoleon, however much we may recoil from the massive selfishness of the man: however sharply we may condemn the vaulting ambition which relentlessly thrust aside whoever, or whatever, stood in his path, yet we cannot altogether withhold our admiration from one whose power is unchallenged throughout his wide domain; at whose command vast armies wheel into line, and touching elbows march out to conquer or to die.

This is power and for it we confess a silent admiration.

But there is another power more terrible far than any ever exercised by mortal man. It is invisible, intangible, and irresistible. It is the power that stirs the mountain peak to its depth, and causing it to erupt, it buries cities and the countryside alike beneath masses of molten lava and of burning ashes, as at Pompeii in the long ago or Mt. Peelee in Jamaica in more recent times. It is the power that causes the solid earth to quiver and quake beneath our feet: at whose touch proud cities crumble into dust, and thus leaves utter ruin in its track, as at San Francisco or Yokohama within the current century. It is the power that gathers the waters in the hollow of its hand and, as a tidal wave, hurls them with destructive fury upon inhabited shores, as was done at Lisbon a century or more ago, or at our own Galveston on the Gulf at the turn of the present century.

But all these phases of earthly power, great and terrible as they are, are but the shadow and the symbol of a mightier reality. They tell in ringing syllables of the presence of an Omnipotent Being whose "throne is in the heavens, whose footstool is the earth, and whose Kingdom ruleth over all." His power is immeasurably greater than all other because it

is without bound or limit. "All power in heaven and in earth is given unto Him." "He doeth His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, 'What doest Thou?'"

His power is immeasurably grander than all other, because it is intelligent and full of purpose; "Known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the world." "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him and the remainder of wrath he will restrain."

His power is immeasurably more glorious than all other because here omnipotence is touched with compassion and back of the hand of power is a heart of love. For "He has loved us with an everlasting love."

These are the qualities of the great God, our Savior, to whom we are invited to commit the keeping of our souls. "He is able"--yes, and He is willing "to save unto the uttermost all them who come unto God by Him." "Whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see him not yet believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

This, O Child of God, is the golden hope that is set before us in the Gospel. Our Christ has not called us into His service and His Kingdom, and then instantly thrust us back, leaving us to fend for ourselves unheeded and unhelped. We are called into battle, but we battle not alone. Before us moves with majestic stride the Great Captain of our salvation. We are called to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold on eternal life. But we fight not alone for at our side stands One who sticketh closer than a brother, who "will never leave and never forsake those who put their trust in Him." This is the promise of His love. Buoyed by this great promise, men and women through the centuries have walked in the midst of difficulty and of danger; they have even faced the cruel rack or the burning stake with serene and quiet confidence. For them and for us, always and everywhere,

"There is a hand almighty to defend
An ear for every call;
An honored life, a peaceful end
And heaven to crown it all."

Do, then, the sharp arrows of the mighty fly thick and fast about you? Lift up your eyes unto the hills whence cometh your help, and He will hold over you the shield of His love and His protecting care, so that every fiery shaft of the wicked one shall fall harmless at your feet. For you are "Kept by His power."

Do you feel at times that your feet are slipping in the mire of selfishness and sin? Then reach out your hand to Him who is mighty to save, and He will set your feet upon the everlasting Rock. For you are "Kept by His power."

At times are you worn and wearied by the constant struggle against sin from without and temptation from within? Then hear His promise to all the toil-worn, discouraged, and weary of earth: "My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness." "Fear thou not for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." "For they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

Thus, O believer, tempted and tried and often hardly beset, the Eternal God is thy sure refuge, and "you are kept by His power." Above you he holds the shield of his unfailing love; underneath are the everlasting arms, sustaining and strengthening you; around about you on every hand is His enfolding grace. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people." "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise in judgment against thee thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord." For, "though the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

This is indeed glorious truth for all those who have given their hearts to the Christ. It is truth that stirs our hearts to their depth and kindles within us a hope that maketh not ashamed.

We have passed out of the dark valley where the heavy clouds often gather and the clinging mists are felt, up to the mountain top where the sun shines bright and warm, and the air is clear and bracing as we move consciously amid the eternal purposes of the living God. This is truth vast in its reach and vital in its meaning to the children of earth. No meager view can explain a fact so mighty. It takes a great theology even to begin to fathom and to follow the purposes of the great God our Savior. A theology that has no room for accident or chance, no place for a "perhaps" or a "maybe," but which proclaims in ringing accents that "God is a Spirit--infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." A

theology that teaches His promises are based upon His power; His power is guided by purpose; and purpose is rooted in love, for we are "kept by His power," and that power is exerted in order that His purposes may be accomplished.

Our redemption, then, is not the result of some sudden impulse. Our salvation is not the fruit of some chance intention of an hour; it is the gracious consummation of ages of loving purpose, unchanged and changeless. "He that hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6). "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love--(Ephes. 1:4)--called to eternal life before our physical life began. And in this chapter from which our text is taken we are told that Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world to be the savior of sinners.

Off our Atlantic Seaboard one of the most amazing phenomenon of our marvelous world is to be found. It is a vast river of warm water, cutting its way for several thousand miles through the very heart of the sea. For lack of a better term we call it "The Gulf Stream." It rises far down amid the steaming heat of the tropics and flows northwestward into the Gulf. Then turning to the right, it sweeps past the Florida Keys out into the vast Atlantic and on to the far north. It is 1,000 feet deep and 120 miles wide at its widest point. In volume it is more than 1,000 times that of the Mississippi, "the mighty father of waters." It is buffeted by adverse winds; great storms sweep across its path lashing its waters into crested waves; dark clouds often settle down upon it, hiding its path, but undeflected from its course, the Gulf stream presses steadily onward until, its great mission in the world of nature accomplished, it loses itself in the vast waste of arctic waters.

So is it *with* God's great purpose to save *The sinner*. That purpose was formed in the councils of eternity when the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and all the vast resources of His grace and power are pledged to its fulfillment. Through the troubled sea of our earthly life, the Gulf Stream of divine Providence makes its way. It is often fretted by angry storms. Its course is darkened by the lowering tempest. It moves often in the teeth of the stormy gale. Dark clouds of sorrow often settle down upon it. The clinging mists of temptation hover close above it, often hiding its path but never for a moment hindering its progress. Yet onward, ever onward, it moves with resistless sweep.

"until in the ocean of His love
It loses itself in heaven above:
Where faith is sweetly lost in sight,
And hope in full supreme delight
And everlasting love."

Perhaps your patience will permit this further illustration. Years ago I made the sea trip from Kobe, Japan to Hongkong and Canton on the S. E. coast of Asia. We weighed anchor at midnight and when we went on deck in the morning we were sailing through the far-famed Inland Sea, perhaps the most picturesque large body of water in the world. Our great ship wound its way majestically among the hundreds of islands, large and small, often terraced to the crest of their small fields of rice or other grain. Sometimes we sailed so close to shore that it seemed we could almost put out our hand and touch the land. After midday we passed into wider waters and the shore lines fell so far away that they looked dim in the great distance. But late in the afternoon we passed once more into a channel, the Straits of Shimonoseki, so narrow and so crowded with tugs and junks and fishing boats that it looked at times as though our great ship could not pass safely through. I was leaning over the rail, I recall, watching our movement with keen interest and marveling at the skill of the pilot, when I looked just ahead and was startled to see a great mountain stretching its huge bulk right across our path. It looked as though we could not avoid striking it, as we moved slowly forward. But in the face of seeming disaster, I felt no tinge of fear, for I knew that the Captain was on the Bridge, and I knew that the Captain knew the channel and would guide us safely through. And so, just as we seemed about to strike, the helm was quietly put about, and the great ship glided into another channel that from my position I could not see, and we were soon safely out in the waters of the China Sea, past every danger that threatened to stay our course.

In the same way, as we sail the seas of this earthly life through channels, sometimes wide, sometimes narrow and threatening and beset by many dangers, we know that our great Captain is at the helm and will guide our frail craft through every danger, until that glad day when we shall cast anchor in the haven of eternal rest, and we shall be at home at last. Meanwhile, let the prayer of our heart be:

"Jesus Savior pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea."

Here, then, we have illustrated for us the glorious promise of his grace, "Kept by the power of God." A promise

that sustained Paul and Peter and John in their great and glorious tasks and sent them forward with elastic step along their appointed way. It enabled them to face duty and danger without a tremor of fear. It fitted them to look through the open doors of a prison, or to look cruel death in the face with unshaken confidence. It gave the ring of courage and lofty faith to all that they said or did. As they were "Kept," so will each one of us be "Kept by the power of God," if we but "lift our eyes to the hills whence cometh our help" and lean hard upon the strong arm of the Almighty. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ: Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:35-39)

"At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As thy day shall demand, shall thy strength ever be."

The power and the promise which sustained them is freely offered to you.

Before you He holds the dazzling splendor of the promised reward. About you and above you on every hand are His unfailing, unforgetting power and love. Press forward, then, along life's crowded pathway unfevered, unfretted, and unafraid.

"O child of God, O Glory's heir
How rich a lot is thine."

THE HANDWASHING JUDGE

MATT. XXVII:24

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: See ye to it."

Pontius Pilate, Roman Governor of Judea, stands face to face with the greatest opportunity of his life. He is squarely confronted with a chance to prove his manhood--to assert his courage and honor and love of justice--such as seldom has come to any man. Yet he failed miserably, and instead of the name and fame he might have won, he has reaped the infamy he so richly deserved.

The record makes plain the fact that Pilate quickly saw the path of right and duty. He perceived and proclaimed the innocence of the prisoner arraigned at his bar, and avowed his purpose to release him, without censure and without delay.

Nevertheless the astounding fact is that the Judge, whose duty it was to defend, and who was possessed of ample power to protect, at last passes sentence of death upon the man whom he has proclaimed to be innocent of any fault whatsoever.

In looking for the cause of this abject surrender of law to lawlessness, we find that Pilate's failure to shield the innocent was due to the fact that he was trying to hide his own guilt. He feared an appeal to Caesar with its ruinous exposure of his own corrupt and cruel administration of the affairs of Judea.

Like many another man, in public and in private station, his record stood in the way of his conscience.

Past misdeeds blocked the path of present duty, and darkly threatened him who would walk therein. Therefore in the hope that he might cover his own sins he surrendered the Sinless One to the rage of the mob.

This was Pilate's splendid opportunity and this his ignominious failure to meet it. Let us now examine Pilate's attitude of mind toward this gross travesty of justice in which he was the principal actor.

What excuse does Pilate render for this judicial murder? How does he seek to escape responsibility for this betrayal of innocent blood?

Matthew tells us that when his decision to release the prisoner was hooted down, and his further proposal to compromise the case by scourging him severely and then setting him free, was met with a wild yell of indignant protest and angry denunciation, and he perceived that the mob would be satisfied with nothing short of the life of this gentle Nazarene. Then, "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: See ye to it."

Thus did the cowardly Magistrate, who bore the sword of power as well to protect the guiltless as to punish the guilty, seek to deliver himself from the charge of bloodguiltiness, and with a little water strive to wash away this foulest crime.

This solemn and dramatic act possessed a significance easily understood by the Jews. David employs that usage in Ps. 26:6: "I will wash mine hands in innocence: So will I compass thine altar, O Lord."

Ancient law and custom among the Jews prescribed the use of this most expressive and impressive symbol for the purpose of disclaiming responsibility for a specified crime. When one was secretly slain, and the body found by the wayside or hidden in field or wood, then the officials of the city lying nearest to the spot where the body of the slain is found shall kill a young heifer in some secluded spot; and then the priests shall come and wash their hands over the dead beast, saying: "Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge." (Deut. 21: 1-9).

Thus Pilate's act appealed readily to the excited mind of the multitude, and as he solemnly protested: "I am innocent of the blood of this just person," they cried defiantly back: "His blood be on us, and on our children." And it has rested there through all the troubled centuries since. It rests there to-day.

But the very desperate earnestness of the Governor's disclaimer is itself proof positive of his conscious guilt. If he felt no responsibility for what was being done, why did he make this dramatic attempt to shift the guilt to others? It was because he felt the pinch and pressure of that responsibility, and hoped by vehement denial to silence the stern voice of his upbraiding conscience, that he did this thing. And the very effort thus to wash his hands of guilt, was evidence conclusive that here was a stain so deep and foul, that no water could ever cleanse it away.

This, Pilate knew full well, for conscience trumpet-voiced did warn him of the truth. Even a Roman poet (Ovid), most popular in Pilate's day, and with whose writings the Governor was probably familiar, had spoken of those--

"Too easy souls who dream the crystal flood,
Can wash away the fearful guilt of blood."

And the greatest of all uninspired poets has powerfully portrayed this truth in his soul-stirring tragedy, "Macbeth." Macbeth was once a brave and loyal knight doing valiant service for his king and country, by whom he was held in highest honor. But his ambition is fired by the lofty prophecies of the witches regarding him, and taking counsel of his wife, they resolve to seize the promised crown, and to wade through blood to the coveted throne.

In the silent midnight watches the dark deed was done, and the aged King, Malcolm, was foully murdered while a guest at the castle of his murderers. This was Glamis Castle, and it may be of interest to say, in passing, that it is the birthplace of the gracious lady who now presides jointly with her royal husband over the far-flung Empire of Britain.

Lady Macbeth at first affects to make light of it all as she blithely says: "A little water clears us of this deed: how easy is it then!"

Not so her once noble husband. Every fibre of his better nature rose in instant revolt against the crime that he had done. And as he looked upon his blood-stained hands he exclaimed in the agony of remorse: "Will all great Neptune's Ocean wash this blood clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red."

Moreover, the wife who thought, like Pilate, to wash away so lightly the stain and smell of blood, who in the first flush of action had declared, as if in playful boast, "a little water clears us of this deed," now finds that like some fearful Nemesis, it pursues her everywhere. Alike in the clinging thoughts of the day and in the haunting visions of the night, her crime confronts her, and fills her soul with creeping fear. Even in her sleep she rises from her bed and walks the floor rubbing her hands as if in the act of washing, exclaiming: "Out, cursed spot, out, I say..... What! will these hands ne'er be clean..... Here's the smell of the blood still: All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand."

Thus has the genius of Shakespeare pictured to us the utter folly of those who think thus lightly to escape responsibility for their acts. Guilt cannot be thus thrown off and discarded like an old garment at the will of the wearer. But rather, like the fabled shirt of Nessus, the more we try to put it aside, the more tightly does it cling and the more tenacious is its grip upon him who had done the deed. It cannot be shifted to another, while at the bar of conscience this judgment is solemnly pronounced: "Every man shall give an account of himself to God."

Pilate found it so. This theatrical handwashing availed nothing. Instead of washing his hands he ought to have exerted them. Instead of being uplifted in mimic protest, they ought to have been extended in protection, so that shielded by the strong arm of Roman power no innocent man could suffer wrong at his judgment bar.

Moreover, the cringing Judge, whose weak will yielded to the clamor of the multitude as the sapling bends before the storm, met the very fate he here sought to avoid. A few years later he was summoned before the Emperor to answer for his official misdeeds, was sentenced to be banished for his crimes, and later is said to have taken his own life.

The greatest of the many great peaks that look down upon beautiful Lake Lucerne bears the name of this ignoble Judge-Mount Pilate. Tradition has it, that in that neighborhood the closing years of his wretched life were passed, and that into the dismal lake that lies amid those everlasting hills, he plunged at last in blind despair, and therein found his grave.

Men say that his vexed spirit still haunts the lake, and that often a shadowy form is seen to emerge from those gloomy waters, and kneeling on the shore, labors long and hard to wash the clinging reeking bloodstains from its hands. While black clouds, and pealing thunder, and sweeping tempest voice all nature's fixed recoil from Pilate's deed of shame.

Such is the legend current among the Swiss Mountains as the sequel to that great event which our text to-day so simply and vividly describes. A legend which historically, as to some of its features at least, is clearly fanciful but which morally is terribly true. For tho' Pilate were washing still, that bloodspot would not "out", and those "hands would ne'er be clean" of guilt; for with a clear vision of the truth he yet "betrayed the innocent blood."

But Pilate is dead. His course is run, and from that judgment bar at which he presided, he has passed to another Bar where he must "give an account of the deeds done in the body."

For who was actually on trial on that historic day in old Jerusalem? Christ or Pilate? On the Judge in his judicial robes the judgment of ancient Belshazzar has gone forth: "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting."

But the spirit that moved Pilate still lingers in the earth. A multitude of evils are in evidence because Christian men and women "wash their hands" and seek to pass the responsibility on to others. Would Sunday Baseball, Basketball, Football, Golf, Polo, and other sports be allowed to flourish on the Sabbath if the Christian majority rose up and declared God's one whole day in seven shall no longer be profaned, for the great command still rings out in no uncertain tones from Sinai's lofty heights: "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy."

The most brazen enemy of God, his Church and people and of the home, is the organized liquor traffic. The Carolinas are overwhelmingly Christian by profession. Both States have declared at the ballot box that not a drop of liquor shall be legally sold for beverage purposes within their borders.

Yet there are licensed liquor shops in many counties of North Carolina, and all over South Carolina. This evil thing is being legally sold. Virginia is also a Christian State by profession--the proud mother of States and Statesmen and the Author of the Bill of Rights, yet Virginia has descended from her high estate, has donned the proverbial white cap and apron, and as a State, is selling liquor across the counter under the specious plea that she is conserving the cause of sobriety by making it easy, and in a multitude of cases, certain that they are helping men to become drunk. Yet men and women still "wash their hands and say, I am innocent." We are not free from guilt so long as we allow this business of dispensing what has been aptly called "liquid fire and distilled damnation" to go on without protest. For the saloon is in no sense a solution of the liquor evil. It is abject surrender to the forces of unrighteousness. And we, as a Christian people, can no more escape responsibility by "washing our hands" and "passing the buck" than Pontius Pilate could on that dread day in Israel's ancient capital. Yet the shining dollar rolling into the public till ~~seems~~ much more persuasive ~~than~~ the conscience of men and women who bear the name of Christ. To the women especially let me say that

when we gave you the suffrage it was with the assurance that your votes linked with those of good men would cause every liquor shop in America to be barred and bolted. Yet the states have never been more "wringing wet" than they are today.

And one day, at the Judgment Bar of Christ, we must give account for our failure to do the right, not less than for our positive wrong doing.

Let Pontius Pilate be our warning.

NAAMAN

II Kings V:9-10:

So Naaman came with his horses and his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go, wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

Our knowledge of Naaman is very limited. The only mention of him in the Old Testament is in this 5th Chapter of 2nd Kings, and this Chapter is devoted almost exclusively to this one overshadowing event in his life. Our Lord also (Luke 4:27) speaks once of Naaman the Syrian, and declares that he was the only leper healed in the days of Elisha the Prophet.

Yet even this brief record is enough to show that Naaman was a man of no little consequence in his own nation. He was, in fact, a nobleman in high favor at the court of his royal master from whom he received distinguished honor. He was also a soldier of ability and renown -- one of the great captains of his age.

We find a significant statement in the first verse of this chapter. "Now Naaman, captain of the Syrian host was a great man with his master and honorable: because by him the Lord had given deliverance to Syria: He was also a mighty man of valor: but he was a leper."

It is clear from this that Syria had been conquered by some alien power, though the Scriptures make no further reference to the fact. But happily secular history here comes in and bridges for us the gap created by the silence of the inspired records.

The vast plain of Mesopotamia, watered by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, was once the seat of the world's leading civilization up to that time. The great cities of Nineveh and Babylon ruled over it in quick succession. While the houses of the masses were built of clay, and left no trace behind them when destroyed, yet the Palace of the King, the homes of the noble and wealthy, the temples and library were builded of permanent materials, and when they disappeared they left a pile of ruins behind. More than a century ago the Archaeologists suspected that valuable historical materials might be contained in those mounds scattered far and wide over the Mesopotamian plains and hence with pick and spade they began to dig into those mounds, and from these sepulchres of a long buried past they brought to light "many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore". These re-

covered records tell us the interesting fact that at the time of which this chapter speaks, the Assyrian Empire (mark the difference in the name) whose territory lay beyond the Euphrates, had pushed its conquests South-westward, had overrun Syria and compelled it to pay tribute to the Kingdom whose capital was at Nineveh.

But Syria, brave, warlike and liberty-loving, was not content to lie idle under a foreign yoke very long. When its preparations were complete, it raised the standard of revolt, conquered its conquerors, and recovered its lost liberty and power. Now Naaman was the leader of the armies of his country in this Syrian War of Independence, and as a result was honored and renowned by King and countrymen alike. Holding a place among them not greatly unlike that of Washington in America or Wellington in Britain.

Nevertheless, victorious captain though he was, honored by his king and applauded by his countrymen, this Naaman was a leper. He was in the deadly grasp of a disease more fearful than any that had yet been forged by Nineveh's King. For leprosy is the most frightful of all the diseases to which human flesh is heir. It is loathsome, incurable, deadly. However slight it may appear to be at first, it spreads with slow, steady and stealthy step until the whole body is brought under its power. It poisons the blood, it eats the flesh, it causes at last the solid bone to rot.

Naaman knew all this, and knowing it looked with dread foreboding to the coming of that day when this silent foe should lay him low in the dust. For before this dread disease, for long centuries the utmost skill of man, stood baffled and helpless. There was no balm in Damascus, and no physician there, who could heal Naaman's hurt. Modern medical science voices the hope that in many cases the disease may be arrested, and perhaps in its earlier stages cured. God grant that this happy prophecy may prove to be at least measurably true. Certainly there was no human cure in Naaman's day, and all the honors that came to him at the hands of king and people were clouded by the knowledge of this dread fact: "He is a leper".

Nevertheless, help was nearer than Naaman dreamed. In the household of this Syrian Captain, there was a Hebrew maid, a slave-girl in fact, captured by some one of the raiding parties that crossed the border into northern Israel and securing their booty returned as quickly as they came.

As this captive maid talked one day with her Master's wife, she told her of Elisha, the Prophet of Jehovah, whose home was in Samaria, of his Godly character and kindly spirit,

and of the works of grace and power that God had wrought by his hand. She earnestly wished that her Master might come in contact with this servant of the Lord that he too might be healed.

Not to dwell longer upon the mere details of this fascinating story let me say that presently we see Naaman with a retinue of soldiers and of servants passing out of the gate of Damascus, and turning his horses' heads toward Samaria, and we find him standing before the door of Elisha's house.

Now in this Syrian Captain seeking health and healing for the body, we see illustrated some of the essential elements of successful approach to God on the part of the sinner on earth.

For these diseases that lay hold of our bodies and leave sickness and suffering and death in their train are but the vivid and livid pictures of that darker and more deadly malady--sin in the soul. And these miracles of healing that crowd the pages of the New Testament, and are found also here and there in the Old, are designed as spiritual object lessons teaching us that He who can thus heal the sickness of the body, is able and willing to heal the far more deadly sickness of the soul.

We shall have time to consider only one of these points of likeness to-day, namely:

The necessity for humility of heart on the part of the sinner. "The humble and contrite heart thou wilt not despise."

Naaman doubtless came to Elisha, at the first, with a very large sense of his own greatness and importance. Probably deep down in his heart was the feeling that it was a distinct condescension on his part to come to this Hebrew Prophet for any cause. It came, therefore, as a tremendous shock in his vanity and pride when standing before the Prophet's door, he received this simple message by the lips of a servant: "Go wash in Jordan seven times and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." He thought that Elisha would be deeply impressed with the dignity and distinction of his foreign visitor, and would extend to him a formal and elaborate greeting, after the manner of the East, assuring him that he felt highly honored at the coming of so distinguished a visitor. Then moving his hand dramatically up and down before him, he would touch the infected spots and the leper would be healed.

This, Naaman clearly expected, and indeed he said as

much. But when he found himself received just as the humblest man in his army would have been received, his anger flamed hotly, and he turned and rode away in towering wrath and indignation.

Let us put ourselves for a moment in the place of this Syrian Captain, and we will see that in one aspect of the case, he was justified in expecting a different reception from that which was accorded him. Remember that Naaman was an Oriental, and Elisha also was an Oriental. Now the Orient places high value upon form and ceremony. Their meetings and their greetings are marked by deference great and genuflexions many.

Anyone who has lived in the Orient will readily understand the matter. Had this been a mere exchange of social courtesies between men of position and influence, whether of the same or of different nationality, Naaman would have had a perfect right to expect the deferential treatment which he clearly did expect but just as clearly did not receive.

But it was not Elisha the man whom Naaman sought. He cared nothing for him. Had he met him when riding through the streets of Damascus or of Samaria he would have passed him by unseeing and uncaring. It was Elisha, the Prophet of Jehovah, upon whom his God had bestowed the power to heal disease that Naaman sought. He came, then, not as man to man, but as a suppliant to him who stood as the representative of Jehovah's grace and power.

All unknown to this heathen captain, it was God who had guided his footsteps thither that he might receive the physical blessing that he sought, and above and beyond all this the rich spiritual blessing which God designed to bestow. But if he is to be brought into a rightly receptive mood for these larger blessings, Naaman must be humbled, his sense of self-desert must be broken, and his haughty pride laid low in the dust. He must be made to know that God is "no respecter of persons," that he "putteth down the mighty from their seats, and exalteth them of low degree."

This was the lesson that Naaman must learn if he is to receive the larger blessing which God held in store for him. He must come before God not as the proud captain who had led the armies of his country to splendid victory, nor yet as the honored courtier of his King, or the favorite of his people. But he must come before God on the same plane with all other men--even as the most obscure subject of his King must come. He must come as a sinner having nothing but needing all; as a man deserving nothing but desiring great and gracious

gifts at his Creator's hands. For in the glory of the divine presence all these earthly distinctions of race or rank or riches melt away, and all men must stand before God on precisely the same platform. The king in his purple robes, the beggar in his rags. The millionaire in his lordly palace, the laborer in his modest cottage. The rich, the poor; the high, the low; the lettered and the unlettered alike must come as sinners stripped of all merit and seeking only mercy divine. "Not the righteous, not the righteous, Sinners Jesus came to call."

The Duke of Wellington was the most honored and influential man in all Britain after Waterloo. On a Communion Sunday in the London Church which he attended when in the city, he went forward with others to partake of the elements after the custom of the Episcopal Church. A laboring man, plainly dressed, walked just in front of the Duke. The Verger (Sexton) observing this said in subdued but pompous tones: "Make way for his grace, the Duke of Wellington." But the great Duke promptly rebuked him, saying; "Not so, my friend, not so. Remember we are all equal here."

The late President McKinley was a devoted member of the Methodist Church. When he went to Washington to become Chief Magistrate of the Republic, it was proposed to him by the officers of the Church he attended there, that the rest of the congregation would remain quietly seated until the President and those with him had received the elements of the Communion at the hands of the Minister. But with that fine sense of propriety which so often marked his public actions the President promptly refused the courteous offer, saying: "In God's house there can be no distinction between President and People, but all must stand before God on precisely the same level. We come as sinners seeking grace and pardon and power divine."

In my library there is a volume I value greatly. Not because of its literary merit, for the style is just a bit heavy, but I value it for the theme presented in its pages. It is the life story of the great and good Queen Victoria of Britain. One chapter is of very special interest for it describes the coronation of the Queen 108 years ago. That was, indeed, a brilliant scene that was witnessed in Westminster Abbey on that historic day, for Britain's "Capital was gathered there her beauty and her chivalry". As the young Queen -- just a "slip of a girl" eighteen years of age -- took the oath of office, the Abbey rang with the shouts of 1,000 voices joined in the glad acclaim: "God Save the Queen". Then seated upon her throne of royal state, the golden sceptre in her hand, and the jewelled crown upon her head, she received

one by one the homage of her loyal subjects. That was indeed a magnificent scene upon which the mind delights to dwell for earthly grandeur could go no further.

Presently there was a pause in these imposing ceremonies. The words of homage ceased. The shouts of eager thousands were hushed. This mighty drama in which the Sovereign, the Princess of the blood, and the great and noble of that and other lands were the actors, was suddenly halted. And why? In order that the young Queen might pause and pay her vows to the "God in whose hands her breath is, and whose are all her ways". She stepped down from her Throne of State, laid her crown and sceptre by, and divesting herself of all traces of worldly pomp and power, she came on bended knee into the presence of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords that she might humbly beseech his grace and guidance, his pardon, and his power in the vast task that lay just ahead.

Have you caught the significance of the scene I have endeavored thus briefly and imperfectly to describe? The contrast between Victoria, proud Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, and Empress of India, "seated high on her throne of royal state that far outshone the wealth of Ormuz or of India, receiving the grateful homage of loyal subjects; and Victoria, the woman, coming on bended knee, as every man and maid and matron must, into the presence of the great God of all the Earth, humbly entreating his blessing and guidance in all the duties of her high office?

Surely as we look upon that beautiful scene and recall how her Christian character developed into the mellow beauty of her later years, we can understand, as never before, the meaning of our Savior's words: "Whoso exhaileth himself shall be abased, but whoso humbleth himself shall be exalted".

So, Brethren, it must ever be. "Man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart." Man has respect for rank or race or riches, but the Lord sweeps all these aside and takes account of the motive that prompts the act--the spirit of the man. And it is ever "the meek and quiet spirit" which is God's sight of greatest price.

This is the lesson that Elisha sought to impress on Naaman the Syrian. He reminds him that he comes before Almighty God not pleading his own merit, but relying only upon a Savior's mercy.

Hence to test the man, and to make him humble himself before God, he sends that strange crisp message by the lips of a serving man: "Go wash in Jordan seven times and thy

flesh shall come again to thee and thou shalt be clean". This brought on within the soul of Naaman a conflict which was fierce and bitter and protracted. At first he turned away in wounded pride and hot indignation, but yielding at last to the counsel of friends, he humbled himself, made the journey of a day and a half to the Jordan, plunged seven times into the muddy water of the river, and "his flesh came again to him as the flesh of a little child, and he was healed." But remember it was not the water that healed him. The Jordan had no healing power. If it had, there would be no lepers left in all that vast region that is still sorely afflicted with this dread disease. It was because he obeyed God's voice, and humbled himself before the Lord God of Israel, that the healing came by divine power. "His obedience was counted unto him for righteousness." He brought himself into living touch with "the power line" that leads straight to the heart and hand of God, and thus the healing came.

So must it be with every man everywhere. He pleads no merit. He parades no good deeds. He presents no shallow righteousness. These things are in His sight but as filthy rags. The sinner trusts only in the loving kindness and the tender mercy of a forgiving God.

"God be merciful to me a sinner" is the only appeal that opens wide the door of heaven to a repentant sinner.

"This all my hope and all my plea,
That Jesus Christ has died for me."

EXCHANGE FOR THE SOUL

Mark 8:37

"What Shall A Man Give In Exchange For His Soul?"

The business of the world is in its last analysis, a mere matter of the exchange of commodities. Your surplus of wheat would be exchanged for my surplus of corn or cattle. In ancient times, and in the less accessible portions of the earth today, this was and is literally true. I am told that in the great valley of the Congo, where our mission to the Black races is meeting with such marvelous success, you can buy a house, or a piece of land, or even a wife for one of many bolts of highly colored cloth.

The general use of money, though existing to a limited degree long ago, is of more modern origin. Yet in highly developed countries like the U. S. A. and Great Britain it is said that from 95% to 98% of the total volume of business is transacted without the exchange of a dollar in actual cash. It is by an exchange of credits--the use of checks or drafts.

Some years ago on a railroad platform in N. C., I witnessed a scene that was both novel and unforgettable. It was the sale of a railroad. The auctioneer, shivering in the winter's cold and confronted by a semi-circle of prominent railroad men, read the order of court directing the sale and then called for bids. In five minutes, or less, the entire transaction was completed and a railroad which began at Tidewater and thrust its steel nails into the red hills of the west, with its road-bed, its rolling stock, its stations, money and all other assets changed hands. Yet all that there was to represent this great transaction was a slip of paper--a check.

But there is one thing I have never seen or heard offered for sale--an immortal soul. True men and women, too, more's the shame, do sell both soul and body for gold, but they would angrily resent the change if it were laid against them.

I have stood in the great Stock Exchange in New York, where billions change hands every day. On one wall hung a great board, on which scores of railroad stocks and bonds were listed. On the opposite wall were listed other scores of industrial stocks. While down on the floor buyers and sellers were shouting like madmen. It was a memorable scene.

But nowhere have I seen or heard this offer made: An immortal soul for sale: What will you give?

We must keep clearly in mind that man is a dual being. He is composed of body and soul, of flesh and spirit. The body perishes and mingles again with the dust whence it sprang. The soul is imperishable. Yet at its maker's command it is loosed from its tenement of clay and is borne out on invisible wings to stand in the presence of the Judge of all the earth to give an account of the deeds that are done in the body.

Yet the needs of the body are so constant and so clamorous, so insistent and persistent, that they too often throw into the back-ground the equally urgent but far less noisy needs of the soul.

Here is a man, you have seen him and so have I, who give meticulous care to the health of the body. At the first serious sign of disorder he calls for the Doctor, or goes to a hospital or a rest-cure. He spares no expense to assure a restoration to health. But this same man will often give no more care to the health of his soul than do the cattle that graze upon a thousand hills.

Here is a mother, you have seen her, so have I, fretted and frightened by some sickness of a beloved child. She summons the Doctor, or rushes to the hospital, ready to spend her money like water for the restoration of the child's health. Yet, in many cases, she gives far less thought, to the spiritual welfare and training of that child than she would give to the training of a blooded colt or a pedigreed pup.

The things that are seen and temporal too often overshadow the things which are unseen but eternal.

Take these physical bodies of ours. One of the most marvelous of God's creation is the human body. Within our bosoms there is a heart that is the only earthly example of perpetual motion. It throbs away day and night, hot or cold, sick or well, driving the blood with the speed of a mill-race to the extremities of the body, and then draws it back through the lungs to be revitalized by the life-giving oxygen and then on through vein and artery again--and all without the touch of human hand or the guidance of the mind.

We carry within our bodies a marvelous chemical laboratory that without the touch of human hand take the food we eat and transforms it into flesh and blood and bone, into nerve and muscle and brain. And so with other qualities of the body which we will not pause to enumerate. For these bodies are indeed fearfully and wonderfully made.

Yet wonderful as it is the body is not an end in itself, but a means to higher and nobler end. For the body is designed to be the temple of an immortal spirit fashioned in the image of God. But it has a higher function even than this for the Apostle (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20) tells us that these bodies of flesh are designed by God to be the Temple of the Holy Ghost. "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God. Which Temple ye are. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's."

Notwithstanding man in his stupidity and blindness, because distorted by sin, so maltreats both body and soul that the glorious image of the Creator has been sadly defaced, and sometimes almost effaced, and man has sunk very low from his original high estate.

Naturally this is far more obvious in pagan than in Christian lands where the uplifting influence of the Gospel is powerfully felt.

The pagans either deify or despise. They deify their Kings and other great men while in their view the masses exist for the pleasure or profit of their so-called betters. They even build temples in honor of their very great and worship them as God. On a beautiful hillside above Nikko, and in a handsome grove of cryptomerias, I visited two splendid temples erected in honor of two of the greatest heroes of Japan. Thither, every year the Emperor, and thousands of others, come to worship the spirit of the men supposed to be here enshrined. But I have seen the dead body of a peasant lying in the streets of Canton, "unwept, unhonored, and unsung," and with none so poor as to do him reverence.

A traveler was making his way across the vast plains of South Africa. In the early afternoon he came to the house of a settler which he was seeking, and as he approached the house he saw a lad, perhaps twelve years of age, throwing pebbles against the house and catching them on the rebound. But one stone glanced to the side and rolled to the stranger's feet. He picked it up and was about to toss it back with a pleasant jest, when something about the stone caught his eye, for he was an expert in precious stones. In that rough pebble, bruised and scarred and stained with the touch of earth, he recognized a diamond of priceless value. This, was the beginning of the discovery of the famous diamond mines of Kimberley--the richest in all the earth.

In the same way the soul of man has through sin and selfishness and all unrighteousness, been stained and scarred, bruised and broken sometimes almost beyond all recognition.

But when there was no other eye to pity and no other arm to save, Christ Jesus came to earth to re-discover the bruised and battered soul that was lost, and to restore it to something of its pristine beauty and power.

For after all the soul is the thing of supreme value. The body perishes and returns to the dust, but the soul lives on through the countless ages of eternity.

What is the thing of greatest price?
The whole creation round?
That which was lost in Paradise?
That which in Christ is found?

The soul of man--Jehovah's breath.
That keeps two worlds at strife.
Hell moves beneath to work its death.
Heaven stoops to give it life.

But man in his pride and folly is reluctant to confess his lost estate. But we cannot act as final Judge in this matter. Our selfish opinion is nothing worth. Christ Jesus is the final Arbiter, for at his footstool we must stand in the last great day of accounts. And Christ says that without Him and His great sacrifice the sinner is lost.

Listen: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost"--not that which may some day become lost. "He that believeth in the son hath everlasting life, but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on Him" (present tense).

In the fifteenth chapter of Luke, one of the most beautiful and best loved chapters in all the Gospels, three parables are recorded. They have been finely called "The Parables of Recovery"--the lost sheep, the lost silver, the lost son. The emphasis is on the finding of that which was lost. The father of the Returning Prodigal sums up the case for all when he declares: "This my son was dead and is alive again: he was lost and is found."

Since then Christ tells us in clear and pointed terms that apart from Him the sinner is lost. The great question of our text imperatively demands an answer: "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul," that is lost? How shall he buy it back? The question brooks no delay for the answer is fraught with life or with death. Men blinded by sin and self have given many answers--but never the right one. They have tried many things, but have neglected the one thing needful.

Here is one who says: I sold my soul for lust, or drink, or for the less revolting forms of earthly pleasure. Now I will buy back my soul by punishing the body, beating it with whips and scorpions, and so let it pay the price of former indulgence.

Chas. Reade in one of his delightful volumes tells of an attractive young monk whose conscience was heavily burdened with a sense of guilt. He tried in many ways to lift the load but in vain. Then he went out into the woods and cut many branches of a thorny shrub and carried them to the cave where he had taken up his abode as part of his penance, and made his bed upon the thorns. They pricked his body and caused the blood to flow and gave him acute pain, but his sense of guilt was not lifted. No, not in this way does pardon lie.

The Hindoo Mother is taught that if she will fling her helpless babe into the swift-moving waters of the Sacred Ganges she will find peace and joy in giving "the fruit of her body for the sin of her soul." She stands fearful and reluctant on the river's brink, and at last throws her child into the swift-flowing river and sees it borne away on the whirling tide, or perhaps devoured by crocodiles before her eyes. But she finds no peace but instead has the bitter knowledge that she has murdered the child of her bosom.

Martin Luther, the great Reformer, to whom, with Calvin, Knox, Zwingli, Melancthon and a few others, Europe is indebted, under God, for whatever of good it possesses today, was, until nearly 35 yrs. of age, a monk of the Roman Catholic Church. With a tender conscience he subjected himself to all the penance and fasting that his church prescribed. He knelt on his bare knees on the cold stone floor of his cell. He counted his beads. He fasted long and often but he found no peace. At last he decided to make a pilgrimage to Rome the holy city of the Romish Church. And so across the hills and valleys of Germany he walked, through the Black Forest where danger and death threatened him at every turn. Across the snow-clad Alps and down into the sunny plains of Italy he passed until at last he entered the gates of Rome.

On one of the lofty hills of Rome stood a famous church with 700 stone steps leading from the street below to its doors. On his bare knees he climbed step by step, knelt at the altar, and counted his beads, and repeated his Pater Nosters; and returned to the street on his bare knees torn and bruised and bleeding.

Eight years ago in the city of Montreal, I witnessed a scene like this. A poor deluded penitent was seeking peace

by climbing on his knees the stone steps that led up to the church on the hill-top. But though Luther's knees, like his, were torn and bruised and bleeding from contact with the rough stone there was no peace in his heart. And he found none until his hungry soul grasped the great meaning of the Apostle's words: "The justified by Faith shall live," and grasped also his answer to the Jailer at Philippi: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and Thou shalt be saved." Not for penance done, not for works of righteousness performed, but "the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin."

But another who has not heard this word of the beloved Apostle will answer: I sold my soul for gold--with gold I will redeem it.

I will establish a mission station in China; or I will build an orphanage where fatherless children may be gathered and trained; or I will build a church where the word of God may be proclaimed. I was walking the streets of a southern city one day with a friend and he pointed to a great brick building across the street saying with a touch of cynicism, "That is Mr.-----'s Conscience." This man had amassed a fortune by hardfisted dealing, and a cynical public thought he was trying to quiet his conscience by building a church. It is, in truth, a beautiful and a most gracious thing to share our income with God and his work. He accepts it as a welcome and proper thing if done in loving gratitude, for a religion that does not touch the pocketbook is scarcely skin-deep. But it is a sordid and ghastly thing to imagine that Heaven can be bought with gold. Though you had the wealth of a Carnegie, and on top of that the millions of Rockefeller and then added the millions of Henry Ford until your dollars touched the clouds, you could not purchase one hour of heavenly bliss, or lessen by a single pang the pains and penalties of the lost.

What, then, shall a man give in exchange for his soul? The question is a theoretical one and demands a negative reply. What shall I give? Nothing under the broad expanse of the heavens, nothing within the wide reaches of the earth can make the guilty conscience clean, or wash away your sins.

The only answer to a lost soul is the Cross on Calvary's Hill. The only price that can be offered has been fully paid in the golden coinage of the skies. For, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us--the just for the unjust."

Dr. A. J. Brown, long the beloved Secretary of Foreign Missions of the Northern Presbyterian Church, was visiting the missions of his Church in the Near East. He came to

Beyrout, where they have a very extensive work. He was reading one day on an upper porch overlooking the street when the clock struck the hour of noon. Straightway, the Muezzin came out on the Minaret on the Mosque across the street and uttered his hollow helpless cry: "There is no God but Allah and Mahomet is his prophet." Instantly the faithful on the sidewalks, in the middle of the street, in the bazaars, or in the homes knelt and repeated the hopeless and helpless cry: "There is no God but Allah, and Mahomet is His Prophet." When their voices died away on the waiting air, there was borne up to him from the basement below the sound of children's voices singing the Gospel Hymn:

Jesus paid it all;
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain.
He washed me white as snow.

Come to Him, then, today with this prayer upon your lips:

"Nothing in my hands I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

And come without delay, for "He is able; he is willing".
Doubt no more.

PSALM XXIII

The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want.

This is the best known and best loved poem in all the world, in any land or language. In partial proof of this, let me say that there is not a sentence in the Psalm that has not served as a text for one or more sermons, on the part of those whose glorious task it is to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

This Psalm has been happily called "the sweet singing angel among the Psalms." Ian MacLaren says of it that "This is the Psalm without which no Scotchman dies happy". Some thirty centuries ago, Israel's beloved shepherd King sat in his royal palace in old Jerusalem - the spirit of the Lord God came upon him. He drew to his side his well loved and well-tuned harp, and as he swept its vibrant strings with skilled fingers, there floated out through the palace windows this immortal song. It was caught up on the wings of the wind, and has been borne to every part of the civilized world, for in every land and language where Christ is known and loved, this Psalm is also known and loved.

One may be ignorant of Shakespeare and Milton and Gray's Elegy - one may not even have heard of Hamlet, of King Lear, of Macbeth, and still be able to hold up his head fairly well in the average social circle, for the average social circle, to borrow a keen English phrase, is not "ferociously literary". But that heart is dull and empty, and greatly to be pitied, that is a stranger to this, the grandest song of the heart. It is so simple in style, so homely and yet so vigorous in imagery, so lofty and comforting in its message, that it easily takes rank as the world's great master piece in song. If you are not familiar with the very language of this song, I would suggest that no better use can be made of a part of this blessed day than to commit this psalm to memory. Also, teach it to the children in the home, for nothing is sweeter than to hear lisped from childish lips, "The Lord is My Shepherd, I Shall not Want".

There are three great truths taught us in this psalm, and all three cluster about the central figure of the Shepherd, viz., the shepherd's protection of his flock, the shepherd's provision for his flock, and the shepherd's comradeship with his flock.

First, then, the shepherd's protection of his flock - this is the basic thought of the psalm, and this it is which makes its other promised blessings possible - "The Lord is

my Shepherd, I shall not want" for his protecting care. But if we would grasp the full message of the psalm, we must divest ourselves utterly of our American ideas of sheep and a shepherd. I think of my native valley where every farm is enclosed, and on practically every farm there is a flock of sheep, large or small; every field, whether on the sloping hills or in the fat meadows, is carefully fenced in, and these fences are so high and strong that the sheep cannot break through or leap over them; and by the same token, most of their enemies are excluded. In such conditions, there is no real need for a shepherd. An occasional visit by someone on the farm, to see that the grass is still green, the streams of water flowing, that there is an abundance of salt, and that none are ailing or injured, is all that is needed for such a flock. But among the hills of Palestine and Syria, conditions are altogether different. There, no fences are found. The best lands are preserved for the production of food and feed crops, for vineyards, olive groves, and orchards. Hence, the shepherd with his flock is thrust back along the rugged mountain side, and enemies are many and ever present. Under these conditions, the presence of a shepherd is essential, for if there is no shepherd, there soon may be no sheep.

You may recall the incident of the young shepherd of Bethlehem who was sent by his aged father to carry rations to his brothers in the army of King Saul. When he arrived, he was shocked and deeply shamed to note the spirit of panic that pervaded the entire army. Across the valley, their ancient foe, the Philistines, were drawn up in battle array. Up and down the intervening valley, their mighty champion boldly stalked, daring any man in the army of Israel to meet him in mortal combat, adding boastfully that he would give his opponent as food to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the forest.

And you remember the classic story of the contest between David and Goliath and its tragic end for the boasting champion of the Philistines. When King Saul looked upon the youthful David, a lad of just 17 years, he said, in effect, "My son, you are too young and inexperienced to meet this veteran champion of the Philistines—he has been a man of war from his youth — he is encased in armor, and his weapons are so large and strong that he could slay you before you could come near enough to strike him down", and David answered, "When thy servant kept his father's flocks upon the hills of Bethlehem, there came first a fierce lion, and then an angry bear, who leaped in seeking to kill or scatter the frightened flock. I attacked them with my bare hands and slew them. Now the Lord who gave into my hands the lion and the bear, will

give also yonder blaspheming pagan". In just the same way, the enemies of God's spiritual flock are doomed to depart, and just as the only place of safety for the flock among those Syrian hills was close to the Shepherd's side and within sound of his familiar voice, so also the only place of safety for the sheep of His spiritual flock is close to the Shepherd's side, for we too are exposed to constant danger and temptation from the enemy of our souls. We are told that "the devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." We know also that he moves among men with subtle cunning of a serpent - to borrow a vivid figure of Genesis IV, The serpent lies at the door of the human heart ready to leap and strike at any unguarded point. Hence, it is clear that the only place of safety is close to the side of the good Shepherd, and beneath His sheltering hand, for that hand is uplifted to protect us against all cause for fear; to turn aside the fiery darts of the wicked one, and cause them to fall harmless at our feet; uplifted that He may strike down every foe, and even when in our pride and folly, we have wandered into the far country, His voice calls to us into the darkness and the distance, in accents sweet and winning, "O Silly Sheep, come near me, my sheep should never fear me, I am the Shepherd true". Yes, the Lord is my Shepherd, and I shall not want for His protecting care".

In the next place, we have a picture of the Shepherd's Provision for his flock. Christ does not call us into His service and His kingdom, and then thrust us back upon ourselves, unheeded and unhelped. But He who calls us also cares for our every need - "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters, He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake".

We must remember that Palestine is subject to frequent droughts, and even in ordinary times, the interval between the early and the latter rains is often long, and the pastures are sometimes dried up, and the streams of water cease to flow. If left to fend for themselves, the sheep would scatter and perish with hunger and thirst, for the sheep is the most stupid and dependent of all God's creatures. He cannot get along without the presence and the care of a shepherd, and perhaps this is one reason why the sheep is selected as the representative of God's people in this world of trial and need. Here, then, the finest work of the shepherd is brought into play. He must go forth and seek grazing grounds; he presses far back among the lonely, rugged hills, and passing over the crest of the mountain, he seeks along the thickly wooded hills that lead down into the Jordan valley - an open space here and there, where the grass grows lush and green,

and the flowing fountain never runs dry. Here, then, we see the significance of the beautiful figure, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside still waters; He restoreth my soul".

But God's provision for His spiritual flock is even more strikingly set forth in the closing verses of the Psalm - "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Have you ever felt, as you read its familiar words, that there was here a break in the dominant figure of the Psalm - an abrupt change from God's great out of doors to a banquet hall and a table spread with every bounty? But I trust that I can make clear the fact that there is no change of figure here, but a Shepherd's Psalm to the very end.

Some years ago, a friend gave me a little booklet that bears the title, "The Song of Our Syrian Guest". It is from the pen of Dr. Knight, a Congregationalist minister of New England, who is describing a very impressive scene in his own home. A visitor is there, a stranger from the Syrian hills, with the dark hair, the dark eye, and the olive complexion, with the soft voice, that is characteristic of those from the near east. They are seated about an open fire on a chill autumn afternoon, sipping their "afternoon tea" and the stranger is telling them about the shepherd life among those far hills of Palestine and Syria, using this Psalm as the basis of his talk. "My lady of the tea cups" made bold to say, "We cannot avoid some feeling of regret that the psalmist did not maintain his beautiful figure of the shepherd life until the end of the Psalm. The change seems too abrupt, from the grazing fields along the mountain side to a banquet hall and a table spread". "Ah", said the stranger, "there is where your western minds are largely at fault. You lack the picturesque and symbolic touch necessary to the full understanding of this Eastern psalm, for it is a shepherd's song to the very end." It describes in beautiful phrase, the great care of the Shepherd for His flock. His function is not merely to find good grazing grounds, but to "prepare" them for the coming of the flock, for enemies are many, varied, and ever present. There are poisonous plants that grow on the mountain sides, of which the sheep eat and die, so these plants must be plucked up and thrown aside. Then also, poisonous serpents abound, and it is essential that the shepherd go carefully over the field to discover these snake holes and their nests among the rocks. He must destroy the one, and either poison or close up with stones the other. There

are also many fierce beasts of prey that live in their caves along the mountain side and over the crest in the thick jungles of the east. These must be driven off or shut up within their lair, by piling stones in the mouth of the cave, and thus you see the significance of the figure, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies". But then my lady of the tea cups again objected that surely the anointing with oil and the cup of cold water were characteristics of an indoor feast rather than of the wide open spaces. "No," insisted the stranger, "this is the most beautiful of all the figures that describe the relation between the shepherd and his flock - when the chill air of autumn steals down on the earth, the sheep must be brought back to the fold to guard them against the cold night air". Now the entrance to the fold is a narrow door. You remember that the Savior said, "I am the door of the sheep", and so when the flock reaches the entrance to the fold, the shepherd takes his stand within the narrow door, and with the movement of his body, closes and opens it at will, for each sheep must undergo careful inspection before being admitted to the fold. Here is one that has slipped upon the rocks and is sore and bruised and panting. Another has been caught by a prickly thorn and the sharp thorn has torn a wound in his side, then the shepherd takes out his horn of olive oil to cleanse and to heal, hence the statement, "Thou anointest my head with oil". But here is a sheep that is not wounded or hurt in any way - it is merely weary and exhausted by its travel. It moves with a slow step, its head hung low. Then the shepherd reaches for the dipper in the barrel of water by the gate, and filling it, plunges the head of the weary sheep into the cold refreshing water, and the sheep, greatly refreshed, with a gentle bleat, passes into the fold. "My cup runneth over". Then as the shadows of the evening gather thickly about them, and "Drowsy tinklings lull the distant fold", the sheep lie down to rest, and if speech were theirs, like the spiritual sheep, they would say, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever", or in the fine phrasing of the Scottish version, "In God's house forever more, my dwelling place shall be". Yes, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want".

In the last place, we have a picture of the Shepherd's Comradeship with his flock - "I am the good Shepherd and know my sheep. He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out, and when he putteth them forth, he goeth before them and his sheep follow him, for they know his voice, but a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep". Thus we see the intimate

comradeship between the shepherd and his flock. Through winter's cold and summer's heat, through storm and sunshine, dark and bright, they live together in intimate comradeship, and know no life apart.

Have you ever thought, that while the figure of a sheep is used in both the Old Testament and the New, to describe God's people, yet we are never likened to cattle. And the reason is plain to see - we drive cattle, and we lead sheep. Often in my boyhood, I have seen herds of cattle being driven from the farm and the mountain side to the railroad station, to be shipped to the markets. Men on horseback and on foot, shouted and cracked the whip, and wielded a sharp goad to force the herd onward. But the shepherd leadeth his sheep - he goeth before them and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

An experience of over half a century lends itself to the conviction that spiritual sheep do not drive well, and if they chance to be sheep of the Presbyterian breed, they do not drive at all. If you try to drive them, they will stick their heels in the earth, and throw back their heads and refuse to move. But if you win their confidence and affection, you can lead them anywhere.

I think the most beautiful term that is employed to describe the work of a minister of Christ is the word pastor. This means literally "shepherd", for we are "under shepherds of the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made us overseers", and a minister of a congregation who is not also a pastor, has lost his good right arm, for this it is which draws him close to his people in friendship and affectionate understanding, and this relationship runs through every step of life. The prophet says: "The good shepherd takes the lambs in his arms and carries them in his bosom." He cares for the young. He keeps in close and frequent touch with those in the active duties of life - the bread winners and the home makers of his flock - he gives special thought to the aged and the infirm. In this he fulfills the high duty and privilege of a pastor's life.

Mrs. Margaret Junkin Preston, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister and the wife of a very distinguished elder, whose gifted pen brought cheer and comfort to many a depressed soul, tells this story of a young Scotch minister among the highlands. He was busy in his study one Saturday afternoon, completing his preparation for the coming Sabbath, when a messenger knocked at his door, with the statement that one of the godliest of the shepherds who lived and toiled among those ancient hills, was very ill, and wished to see the min-

ister. As quickly as he could, he left his study and walked rapidly across the moor and knocked at the door of the modest cottage. He was taken at once to the sick room, and saw at a glance that the old shepherd's condition was very serious. He was propped up in bed, and was breathing with difficulty. As soon as the greetings were over, he said gently to his good wife, "Jean, leave us for awhile - I wish to see the minister alone", and when the door closed behind her, the minister said the dying man turned to him the most pathetic face he had ever seen, and said with deep feeling, "Minister, I am dying, and I am afraid". At once the minister began to quote some of those rich promises in which the scriptures abound, and the man said, "I know them all, and yet I am afraid". "Do you not believe them?", the minister asked. "Yes, I believe them with all my heart, but still I am afraid". Then picking up the Bible which lay at the side of the sick man, the minister said, "But there is one fine passage whose meaning you have missed, the 23rd Psalm". "Ah", said the man with a touch of impatience, "I kenned it before you were born, and I have conned it a thousand times on the hillsides while I watched my sheep". "But", said the minister gently, "there is one clause whose meaning you have missed, - "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil", for the true believer, there is no death in the darker sense of the term, but merely the swift transition from the light into the thick shadow and out again, into the light that shines beyond, and so the psalmist does not speak of the valley of death for the believer, but the "valley of the shadow of death," for a shadow has no real substance. As you have guarded your flocks among the hills, you have often noticed that some times the sky became overcast, and dark and threatening clouds filled the heavens so that the light of the sun was completely shut out. Did you feel that the sun was blotted out forever, and would shine no more, or did you realize that soon the clouds would roll away, and the sun again light the hills with all its golden glory? You are passing through the shadow, but soon the clouds will lift and the eternal hills will be bathed in the golden light of the sun of righteousness". Then a smile broke over the face of the dying man, as he exclaimed, "I see, I see! I never saw that meaning before, but now I understand that for the believer death is but a shadow - a shadow with Christ behind it, a shadow that will pass. Minister, I am afraid no more".

So, for each one of you, as your lives are hid with Christ in God, the sun of righteousness will light your pathway to that city that "hath no need of sun nor of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof" for there we shall be forever with the Lord and peace and beauty and glorious rest shall be our portion forever and ever.

JOSEPH THE PRIME MINISTER

Genesis 39:2 "The Lord was with Joseph."

"Princes and Lords are but the breath of Kings; an honest man's the noblest work of God." Thus sang the beloved poet of the Scottish Hills a century and a half ago. Surely no mere man has met the poet's test more grandly, or worn in more conspicuous degree the marks of the divine handiwork than did this brilliant son of Rachel. He was honest, brave, and true--inflexible and incorruptible alike in his public and in his private life. A few rare spirits have risen as high as he, but none have excelled him in goodness and greatness of spirit. No mere man who has moved with majestic tread across the crowded stage of history, and borne a conspicuous part in the tangled drama of its life, has presented a character more lofty and unblemished, or a personality more magnetic and inspiring.

It is a far cry from the plain of Dothan to the palace of the Pharaohs; from the position of a slave lad in the home of Captain Potiphar in Egypt, and then from the blackness of a dungeon keep, to the place of Prime Minister of the greatest empire of his day. Yet in whatever situation we find Joseph, he always rings true. In every test to which he is subjected, he gives the world assurance of a man, and what is far nobler; assurance of a man of God.

In him we discover sweetness of spirit without weakness; purity without puerility; princely station without undue pride; vast power without any resultant enervation of character. For in him the elements of gentleness and strength are so finely blended that we scarcely know which to admire the more: his splendid mastery of self or his vast power exercised solely for the good of others.

Surely such a character challenges our scrutiny and will richly repay our study.

Our theme then today is God's method in the making of a man. For men like Joseph are made; they are not simply born. They do not spring into the crowded arena of life like the fabled Minerva, full-panoplied from the head of Jove. They are born with latent powers and possibilities just as other men are born. And then in the crucible of life, in the contests, and contacts and conflicts of this earthly existence those powers are developed or they are dissipated, and character is made or marred. In the good Providence of God we are permitted to follow the career of Joseph from a winsome lad in his Father's home to a man noble in character

and magnificent in achievement. And this in the face of outward conditions the most adverse and hostile. No man was ever subjected to more searching tests; yet always he "did justly, loved mercy and walked humbly with his God", and so doing came off more than conqueror.

Joseph was subjected to a four-fold test. By some one or more of these each one of us is faced, but Joseph met all four of them and triumphed over all.

The first test to which he was subjected was:

ADVERSITY. His descent from the position of a favorite son in the house of an indulgent father to that of a slave lad in a distant land was as abrupt as it was complete. Moreover it was not a stranger, or an open enemy, that laid him low. It was his own brothers; men in whose veins flowed the blood of his own father, who struck below the belt and hurt him sorely. Well might he have said with the Psalmist, "It was not mine enemy that hath done this, but mine own familiar friend. He that did eat bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." But he gave himself with such skill and energy to his new task that he quickly won his Master's favor and was rapidly promoted to positions of trust until he became the steward of Potiphar's house and was so completely trusted that his master took no further account of his possessions and "knew not what he had save the bread that was upon his table."

But while the sun of prosperity and contentment had begun to shine once more across his path, a new blow fell with all the suddenness of a "lightning stroke from out the blue sky." His master's wife falsely preferred grave charges against him; and apparently without any investigation, Potiphar flew into a rage and thrust his once trusted servant into the blackness of a dungeon cell, and, so far as the record shows, left him there to "rot and to die." It was high character that brought him low. It was because he dared to do right and refused to do wrong; because he was too righteous for his brothers and too honorable for his master's wife that drove him into slavery and at last landed him in a dungeon keep.

Now, how did Joseph react to these multiplied wrongs--to what the Great Bard calls "the slings and arrows of our Burthened life"? What would have been your reaction or mine to like outrages?

I am sure we should have felt that God had abandoned his throne. That Justice had fled the universe. That sin

was in the saddle now and was riding roughshod over the sons of earth.

But not so with Joseph. He was sorely tried yet his faith was unshaken. For him God was still in his heaven, and someday all would be well with the world. For "He maketh the wrath of man to praise him and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." Though "right seemed forever on the scaffold and wrong forever on the throne" yet faith discovered "God standing within the shadow, Keeping watch above his own." Hence he railed not at those who had wronged him. He murmured not at his hard fate. He neither yielded to despair nor plunged into reckless dissipation but with head erect walked with firm and fearless tread the dark and broken path that stretched before his feet, ever looking unto Him who is the author and finisher of his faith. He committed all things unto Him that judgeth righteously, assured that some day justice would prevail. For "The Lord was with Joseph." God was his exceeding great reward.

The second great test to which Joseph was subjected was the test of PROSPERITY.

Surely extremes meet in the case of Jacob's great son. There is a vast chasm between a slave in a foreign land, and the blackness of a dungeon cell on the one hand, and a place next to, and almost above, the throne of the world's most powerful king on the other. This was the transition that Joseph experienced.

Pharaoh, King of Egypt, dreamed a dream and was greatly perturbed thereby. He dreamed a second time and was still more deeply perplexed as to the meaning of his dream. He consulted the magicians, and other wise men of Egypt but they could give him no light. Then a strange thing happened. A servant came into the royal audience chamber and said "Your Majesty, I do confess my sin this day. When we fell into disfavor and you thrust the chief baker and myself into prison, we also dreamed dreams, and like your majesty, we were profoundly disturbed. But a young Hebrew in the prison observed our troubled state of mind. We told him our dreams and he interpreted them for us, and matters turned out exactly as he said. But I forgot to report his case to your majesty for he is guilty of no wrong."

Here was unexpected light on a dark and troubled path, and Pharaoh sent posthaste to the prison and summoned Joseph into the royal presence.

When Joseph stood before the king, Pharaoh rehearsed the dreams that had troubled him so gravely, and Joseph, mod-

estly disclaiming any personal skill, said "God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Then he proceeded to explain that God was thus forewarning him that there would be seven years of extraordinary plenty when the fields would yield such abundant crops as had never been known in the land of Egypt. But these years of plenty would be followed by seven years of drought and famine when the land would lie waste and no crops would grow. Then he advised Pharaoh to seek out some man wise and able who would gather and store a portion of the crops through the years of plenty, and hold them against the days of want and hunger that lay ahead.

And Pharaoh answered, "Who so discreet as thou art? I will make thee ruler over all Egypt next in authority and honor and power to the king himself." Then he placed a golden chain about his neck--symbol of the royal favor; clothed him in royal robes and on his finger he placed the signet ring, the token of full authority throughout all the borders of Egypt. Also he assigned him the Second Chariot in the kingdom, with runners to go before him through the narrow crowded streets of the city, crying, "Make way for Zaphnath-Paaneah, the revealer of secrets."

Thus Joseph's cup of favor and of power was suddenly filled to overflowing.

Few men have climbed such dizzy heights of fame and power and have kept the head clear, the heart pure, and the hands clean. For prosperity is a far more searching test of character than adversity is. In adversity the need for help, and for something better, is so evident that it needs no argument. Instinctively we turn to that Power that is higher than earth.

But in prosperity the ear is deafened with the sound of material things; the eye is dulled by the sight of the multiplicity of things; the feet are entangled in the crowding abundance of mere things. Until at last many of us need to be reminded of the warning that rang in the ears of Belshazzar in his splended palace: "Thou are weighed in the balance and found wanting. Thy kingdom is taken from thee for the God in whose hands thy breath is and whose are all thy ways thou hast not glorified." Not so with Joseph. He maintained his simplicity of heart. "He set the Lord God before his face and kept him at his right hand so that he should not be moved." He went in and out of the palace of Egypt's king untouched by its pride, untainted by its corruption, and unawed by its power. "He did justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with his God." For "The Lord was with Joseph."--God was his Exceeding great reward.

III. He was tested as to his VIRTUE.

The Citadel of his honor was hotly assailed. The fierce demons of lust seethed and surged about him, knocking loudly at the gates of his soul, and demanding admittance. But he kept the gates of his soul securely barred and bolted. It was a woman who tempted him--a woman older than he and one who moved in the upper circles of Egyptian Society. She was therefore well skilled in those arts and wiles with which through the centuries designing women have ensnared weak and all too willing men. Consider his situation. He was a youth with the hot blood of youth coursing through his veins. He was far removed from the restraints of home. He was a slave, and no one expected anything of a slave. The chance of detection was remote. Moreover, the temptation was presented not once but many times, and the constant dropping of water will wear away even the granite stone. But while "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned," yet Joseph stood firm as Gibraltar amid the angry waves of the Atlantic beating themselves into foam against its rocky walls. He foiled the tempter at every turn. Though sharply assailed he held aloft the shield of faith, so that every fiery shaft of the wicked one fell harmless at his feet. "His strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure." Always and everywhere he wore "the white flower of a blameless life," for he felt "within him a peace above all earthly dignities--a still and quiet conscience." For "the Lord was with Joseph--God was his exceeding great reward."

IV. He was tested as to his spirit of VENGEANCE.

Surely no man was ever more bitterly wronged than Joseph ---wrongs many times enhanced because they came from the hands of his own brothers in the flesh. As he came across Dothan's plain, wholly unaware that any danger threatened, his brothers saw him and exclaimed, "Behold this dreamer cometh. Let us kill him and then we shall see what will become of his dreams." They seized him, handled him roughly, and then thrust him into a dry well intending to kill him and deceive his old father as to the manner of his death. But while they lunched, a group of Ishmaelite Traders, bound for Egypt with Arabian spices to sell, passed that way. Then, smitten with mingled hatred and lust for gain they decided to sell their brother into slavery--which they regarded as a more prolonged and painful form of death. Thus Joseph, at seventeen years of age, rode away to a strange land, and to a life presumably of utter misery.

Nevertheless long years after by the turn of fortune's wheel, which is but another way of saying by the good pro-

vidence of God, his enemies are now in his power. What shall he do with them? Shall he pay them in their own coin -- full measure pressed down and running over? Shall he crush them under his iron heel, and stand by exulting in their pangs? This I fear is what many of us would have wished to do under like conditions -- or even under conditions not a fraction as bad. But not so with Joseph. Instead of revenge he showed the kindness of God unto them. When they stood cringing and affrighted before him, he amazed them by saying, "Ye meant it to me for evil, but God meant it for good. For he sent me before you to preserve life--your life, and the lives of your wives and children" and of an uncounted multitude besides.

What a rebuke and challenge all this is to us. We nurse our real or fancied wrongs and would like to visit retribution upon those who have occasioned them. How often have you heard a man or a woman say? "I'll get even with that person if it is the last thing I ever do." Go stand with Joseph and hear him breathe generous forgiveness, not punishment, upon those who have so bitterly wronged him. Better still go stand with Jacob's greatest son as he hangs in agony and shame upon the cruel cross, and while brutal men are taunting and cursing the Great Sufferer--hear him pray, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your father forgive your trespasses."

I have endeavored to trace thus briefly and imperfectly the divine process in the making of a man. In the great laboratory of God, in the crucible of life, in the vast workshop of the Eternal, Joseph was sternly tested, and in many ways, and came forth every inch a man--pure gold without alloy.

You also are tested in many ways as you walk the broken path of life. What will be the result? Will you weakly and in craven spirit, say I was tempted and I did so and so--as though temptation is ample excuse for failure. Remember rather that temptation is a call to arms, not a summons to surrender. It is God's challenge to "fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold on eternal life." Go, then, ye who are tempted and tried and stand with yonder young Hebrew, listen to the beating of his great heart and learn from him "to suffer and be strong." Let this be your watchword as you move out upon the pathway of life:

"I know not the way before me
But well do I know my Guide,
With a trusting heart I give my hand
To the Friend who walks at my side,
And all that I say as he takes it is:
Hold me fast,
Suffer me not to go astray
And bring me home at last."

I SHALL BE SATISFIED

Psalm 17:15

Satisfaction and dissatisfaction, content and discontent, mark the two poles in the mental attitude of men and women in this work-a-day world toward the experiences of life.

Satisfied: Unsatisfied: Dissatisfied. Few words are more familiar to the ear, or more frequently upon the tongue, than the word satisfy in some one of its many forms, yet few are more difficult to clearly define. Let us turn for help to the root meaning of the word. One of its basic meanings is to fill to the full; to fill to the limit of its capacity a vessel - or the heart of man. When it will hold no more the vessel - or the heart - may be said to be satisfied.

This is the thing for which men and women have been eagerly striving through all the long centuries. But the tragedy of it all is that in their seeking, in blindness and folly, they have followed the path that led them directly away from the coveted goal. Satan, who is always busy at his unholy task whispers: "get gold and you will be happy. Gain riches and every desire of your heart will be satisfied." The brilliant Satirist of ancient Rome some twenty years centuries ago voiced this sentiment when he wrote: "The smell of gold is good, therefore get gold. Get it honestly if you can but anyhow get gold, and you will be happy." And uncounted thousands who never heard the name of Horace have been treading with desperate earnestness the path he marked out. Scorning delights they have lived laborious days. They have eagerly faced hardship and suffering, hunger and cold, and sacrifice of every sort. They have even dared death; as in the Alaskan gold-rush, in the bare hope that they might find the coveted yellow metal. Even if they succeeded, and many returned empty handed, they found to their sorrow that gold could not buy happiness - the yellow metal could not bring joy and peace to the hungry heart. Gold cannot even buy health much less can it purchase happiness.

A few years ago the richest man in the world, with millions piled high about him, with money enough to buy every costly luxury the market afforded had to live on crackers and milk. With countless wealth at his disposal he could not buy that which the laborer had without money and without price - a normal healthy appetite.

Many years ago I was sitting in the lounge of a great ship on the Pacific talking with some fellow passengers when a globe-trotter from New England remarked with a quaint touch

of humor: "Well I'm paying \$33.00 a day for this trip and am living on crackers and milk." His gold could not ensure him an appetite.

In the spring of 1865 there came to my native town in the beautiful valley of the Shenandoah a young man between 20 and 24 years of age, whose sole capital was a neat but well worn gray suit, and perhaps as much as \$5.00 in his pocket. He had laid down his gun at Appomattox, but he had not surrendered his manhood or his right to make a living. He invested his small capital in pins and thread, and ribbons and buttons, and little trinkets, and peddled them from door to door. His stock was quickly sold and he purchased a much larger supply with like results. He then opened a small store and as business prospered he enlarged the store. At length, smitten with the ambition to become a Merchant-Prince, he moved to New York and opened a business which steadily grew on middle Broadway and became at last a multi-millionaire. His old Father went to New York to spend his last days in his son's home, and when he died his son, at his Father's request, brought his body back to Virginia that he might sleep in the soil of the old dominion, hard by the singing waters of the Shenandoah - "the laughing daughter of the stars" as the Red Men called it in their picturesque tongue. Though himself a confessed pagan he wished his Father to be buried with Christian Rites, and so requested a kinsman of mine, an Episcopal minister, to conduct the service. My kinsman drove out the afternoon before the service to call, and he told me of this conversation with the son of the man whose body lay silent in death close by. "Mr. Tucker," he said, "I once thought if I could make \$5000 I would be happy. I made it but no happiness came. So I raised the figure to \$25,000 and then to \$100,000 but no happiness came. I then raised the figure to a million, and then to many millions but still no happiness came. O, tell me, Mr. Tucker," he cried with tragic bitterness, "how can I get the happiness that money cannot buy?"

But another will say try the pleasures of the world, plunge into the whirling tide of social enjoyment, "on with the dance let joy be unconfined." Lord Byron is probably the outstanding example of the man who tested that theory to the limit. He was "born to the purple," of noble blood with access to the inner circles of British Society. He was handsome, charming and brilliant. He drank the cup of social pleasure to the dregs. At the early age of 36 he wrote this as his estimate of it all - the judgment of one who knew:

"My life is in the yellow leaf
The fruits and flowers of love are gone;
The worm, the canker and the grief
Are mine alone."

Or still another will advise: Seek a place of leadership in the business world, or a place of influence and power in political life, and happiness will flow into your soul in abundance. An outstanding example of this attempt at satisfaction is found in the late Thos. C. Platt of New York. He tried both lines of approach. He became the head of one of the great Corporations of America. He also became a noted political leader and was for many years the uncrowned King of the Empire State, and its representative in the U.S. Senate. When he reached his 72nd birthday still hale and active, he went to his office, and found his desk covered with flowers and letters and telegrams congratulating him upon his outstanding success. As he read he paused and made this tragic comment, "Seventy-two years - so many years and months and weeks and days - and none of them worthwhile."

It is in fact the rankest folly to imagine that the things of time and sense can permanently satisfy an immortal soul.

A selfish and earth-centered life will even prove a weight to drag us down not wings on which we rise to higher and nobler things. An immortal being, fashioned in the image of God, fitted for communion with Him and for His service can never be content with the passing and perishing things of earth - things that perish with the getting.

The prodigal tried it. With proud heart he passed over the threshold of the old home out into the great world to become "Lord of himself, that heritage of woe." He plunged into every form of dissipation and gathered about him a large group of friends. But after a while his money was gone--wasted in riotous living" and the so-called friends vanished with it, until at last he was reduced to the companionship of hogs and harlots, and his food was the husks which the swine did eat. Utterly dissatisfied he turned at length to the Father's house in penitent entreaty. "As the heart panteth after the water-brook so panteth my soul after thee, O God," cried the sweet singer of Israel thirty centuries ago. And Augustine, who had been a prodigal himself, cried "O God, thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee." True and lasting satisfaction is then possible only to the believer, and for him it lies only along the path of Faith and Obedience, and loving service. The unbeliever, following hard after the devices and desires of his own selfish heart, cannot have it, any more than we can find the fabled pot-of-gold which childish legend told us lay at the rainbow's base waiting the coming of our feet. But the Believer may and ought to have it if he will but seek it in God's appointed way. For God should be the centre of his heart and hope. Believing in God he would have his faith

grow more strong and clear. Knowing God he would know him better whom to know aright is life everlasting. Loving God he would learn to love more deeply Him "who loved him, and gave himself for him." Lord Tennyson cried in his maturer days, "my most passionate desire is for a clearer and fuller vision of God."

You will recall that at the close of our Lord's ministry there came to Jerusalem certain Greeks who sought out a disciple and said to him, "Sir, we would see Jesus." You observe that when they wished to find the Christ they asked his disciple and he pointed them to Jesus. If today they came to you, my christian friend, asking for Jesus, can you point the way and lead them straight to the Christ even as Philip did? God grant that it may be so. Moreover, these men were not prompted by idle curiosity. They did not simply wish to catch a glimpse of the great Teacher and Miracle-worker whose name in friendship or in hatred, was on every lip. These were devout men trained in the scriptures of the Old Testament and they trusted that this was He of whom Moses and the prophets did speak - the anointed of the Lord. To whom they desired to pledge their allegiance when they earnestly declared, "Sir we would see Jesus."

In the Soul's vision of the Christ there are four stages.

1. Justification. The pardon of our sins. This is the act of a moment and occurs but once as our catechism so clearly teaches. In the great forum of heaven Christ says, "Father, this is my friend. For him (or her) I died on Calvary. His guilt (or hers) was nailed with me to the cross. Henceforth this person is my trusted disciple."
2. Sanctification. This is not an act completed in a moment of time, but a work, which begins at the moment of your conversion and ends only when you have drawn your last breath. The growth of the soul like that of the body is a very gradual thing. Little by little - inch by inch - "we rise on stepping stones of our dead selves to higher things." There are those who will tell you that they have been sanctified in a moment; and they will even tell you the very hour it occurred. They are sincere and well meaning folks but they are simply ignorant and mistaken. We can no more leap from sin and infirmity into perfection, than the child can leap from its mother's arms into full-grown manhood or womanhood. It is a slow, gradual, and often painful process marred by many failures. Paul, grandest of all the servants of the King, says, "The good that I would I do not, and the evil that I would not, this I do." Our Catechism in lofty terms declared: "the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory."

After justification and sanctification there comes glorification. 3. Then shall we be glorified. Laying aside the frail and often stained garment of the flesh we shall "enter into the rest that remaineth to the people of God." Crowned with victory thro' Christ our Redeemer King we shall join the saints, and the vast company of the redeemed of earth, in the triumphant shout: "holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, heaven and earth are filled with the majesty of thy great glory." And after this comes (4) Satisfaction. Every desire of the soul will have been fully met. Every longing gratified. In the presence of the Redeemer we shall be entirely content "when I awake I shall be satisfied with thy likeness." Justified, sanctified, glorified, satisfied.

There was an old woman born and reared in one of the narrow coves of our Carolina mountains and had never journeyed far beyond its narrow limits. When she looked out of her door she looked into a wall of rocks and trees just ahead. When she lifted her eyes at night toward the starry heavens she saw only a small strip of sky. Her life was limited and hedged in on every side. A friend took her one day from her modest cottage crowded in among the everlasting hills down to the sea-shore. She stood in wonder on the sandy beach and looked out upon the vast sea that stretched away to the far horizon, and filling her lungs with the clean salt air of old ocean she exclaimed, "At last I have enough. I'm satisfied."

So too when the heart is filled with gladness, and with the peace that passeth all understanding we too shall be satisfied.

Ian MacLaren tells in his own charming way the story of a blind girl in the Parish of Drumtochty. Her name was Marjorie Robb. She was born blind. In all her life she had never looked upon the golden glory of the noontide. She knew nothing of the blended beauty of mountain, and river and plain. She had never looked upon the wonder of the starry heavens. Yet she was happy and content, with a beautiful christian spirit. The elders called one day in their rounds, and Burnbrae, gentlest spirit in the Glen, moved with sympathy for her infirmity tactfully referred to it. But this splendid girl quickly replied, "Oh, you must not pity me as though God had been unkind, as though He had taken away some gift once bestowed. My life has been all getting - not losing. But there is one blessing he has in store for me that fairly frightens me, for I'm not worthy." "And what might that be, Marjorie?" Burnbrae gently asked. She answered, "You know sometimes a Father in playing with his bairn places his hands

over its eyes completely shutting out the light. Then suddenly lifting his hands the laughing child looks into the Father's face. Now God has placed his hands over my eyes. He has completely shut out the light. But someday, someday, those hands will be lifted. And the first thing blind Marjorie will ever see will be His ain dear face."

"As for me I shall behold thy face in righteousness; when I awake I shall be satisfied with thy likeness."

PAUL'S SAILING DATE

II Timothy 4:6

The time of my departure is at hand.

In the study of this text I stumbled upon a very interesting and a highly suggestive fact. I found that the basic meaning of the word here translated "Departure" - "the time of my departure is at hand" - has reference to the sailing of a ship. Any of you who have been to sea - in the larger sense of a real voyage - will doubtless recall your first sailing as one of the memorable incidents of your life. It is well over half a century since I first went to sea, yet the experience is just as vivid to me as if it had happened yesterday. The cargo was safely stowed in the hold. The passengers were all on deck or in their cabins. Many friends had come to bid us a safe and pleasant voyage and the decks were alive with chattering groups, when suddenly a shrill whistle warned us that the ship was ready to sail. Swift goodbyes were said as an officer went along the crowded decks shouting "all ashore, who are going ashore." The gangplank was raised, the ropes cast off, and presently the great vessel began to back into the channel, and turn its face toward the Golden Gate, and the vast ocean that stretched beyond. Thus Paul is telling us that his ship is about to sail. Its cargo of faith, and love, and service is all on board. Presently the anchor will be lifted and the good ship will turn its prow toward that vast ocean, somewhere along whose farther shore lies Heaven.

It is to me a deeply interesting coincidence that when the best and best loved of all the British poet-Laureates is about to pen his swan-song he chooses this same theme "the sailing of a ship." We are told that Alfred, Lord Tennyson, was seated one day in his library in old England when what the poets call "the Divine Efflatus" came upon him. Mentally highly wrought the poet dashed off the exquisite lines of his "Crossing the Bar."

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me,
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea."

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too deep for sound or foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep,
Turns again home."

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark,
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark."

"For though from out our bourne of time and place,
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the Bar."

If Paul had written that poem, exquisitely beautiful as it is, I think he would have changed just one word. Tennyson humbly wrote "I hope to see my Pilot face to face, When I have crossed the Bar." But I think Paul would have written "I know I'll see my pilot face to face." For Paul was the Apostle of Knowledge. To the Romans he writes: "We know" - not merely we hope, nor even that we believe, but "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." And again to his young friend Timothy, pastor of the Church at Ephesus, he writes: "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

But perhaps you are ready to say: "But Paul was no poet." "He was a profound theologian, an eloquent orator, a skilled logician, but Paul was no poet." But I'm wondering if Paul after all was not a poet. If poetry consists in a succession of mere jingles - a collection of cheap and easy rhymes - then Paul was no poet. But then neither could Shakespeare nor Milton be classed as such. In their classic productions there is much of rhythm but very little rhyme.

Are you aware that the greatest prose-poem in any language came from the heart and pen of the great epistle to the Gentiles - the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal" - and so on to the end of that marvelous chapter.

It is said that Benjamin Franklin was on one occasion in a company of French scholars most, possibly all, of whom were infidels. They talked of literary matters and finally spoke of love. One spoke scoffingly of the Bible as just an ordinary book of no special literary merit. Take for example the matter of love. There is nothing on this great theme in the Bible that compares with the writings of our best French authors. Franklin let them talk for a while, and then taking from his pocket a small leather-bound volume he said: "Gentlemen, I would like to read you a passage I have found that deals with this theme." As he read "Though I speak with the

tongues of men and of angels" and on to the end of that chapter so familiar to us, his hearers exclaimed, "how beautiful," Closing the book he said, "Gentlemen, that is from the book at which you have just been scoffing" and resumed his seat among a very embarrassed group of men of letters. Yes Paul was a great poet as well as a great orator.

But Paul's serene confidence, his triumphant assurance was deeply rooted in two great facts, viz. His faith in Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of the World, and his faithfulness to the Christ "who loved him and gave himself for him."

For Paul was about to enter upon a great adventure. He was to sail an ocean as yet wholly uncharted by man. It was to him as truly an unknown sea as was that vast Atlantic over which Columbus sailed his frail craft when he set out in search of a new world which he believed lay somewhere beyond the setting of the sun. For Columbus it was a veritable voyage of discovery - the finding of a largely untrodden wilderness. For Paul also it was a voyage of discovery though not the finding of something undreamed of. It was rather the larger realization of the dazzling splendors of the land beyond the sunset. "For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God has reserved for those who love him."

The ships of commerce go and come again laden with the rich treasures of those lands afar. Their sailors come with strange, and sometimes startling tales of the men and things that they have seen on the other side of the world.

But the ships that sail the ocean of eternity come not again. But their voyage ended they cast anchor in a golden harbor where the sun shines warm and clear, and where the waves are still, and where the dark and clinging shadows of the night never fall, and where the storms of earth assail us never - "for no storm ever breaks on that glittering strand while the years of eternity roll."

Few and far between are the messengers who have come back from that other world to this. Moses and Elijah came and stood with our Lord upon the holy mount when he was transfigured before them, and "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."

Moreover we are told what they talked about. It was not the glories of heaven for Jesus knew vastly more about this than these men had learned even after centuries of sojourn. But they talked about the two greatest events that lay just

ahead-the greatest in all the history of the world-the Death and Resurrection of the Lord of Glory. Luke (9:31) says "they spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." But in the Greek Luke uses a far more suggestive and comprehensive term: "They spake of his Exodus which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" - a term which embraces his death, his Resurrection, and his ascension to the Father's right hand. And who could be better fitted to speak with him of his mighty Exodus than Moses who led the Exodus from Egypt, and Elijah who made his Exodus in a glowing chariot of fire. Lazarus also came back after a brief sojourn in the spirit world, but his lips were sealed, and not a word did he utter as to the wonders of the Great Beyond.

Only one traveler has ever come from that golden harbor to these earthly shores with the thrilling story of the wonders of the glory land, and that was Jesus the son of David, the son of Mary, the son of God.

Jesus came from Heaven to earth for a three-fold purpose.

1. To reveal God in all his wondrous beauty and perfection to a sin-clouded world. The Jews had this revelation for the Old Testament taught it clearly. The most beautiful and comprehensive description of God is found in the Old Testament (Exodus 34:6-7) It was uttered at the most surprising of all places - at Sinai - amid thunder and lightning and earthquake as the mountain trembled beneath the footsteps of the almighty. But the Jews so emphasized the sovereign power of God that they overlooked his tender grace and compassion. The heathen had lost all idea of a good and gracious God. Not long ago I read the story of a Hindoo mother who went with her little child to worship her pagan God. As they approached the image the child was so terrified by its ugly and threatening aspect that it turned and fled screaming from the building and no amount of persuasion could induce it to return. What a startling contrast is this to the Christ on the mountain-side taking the children in his arms and blessing them, and saying "suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Thus Christ came to restore to the world its lost vision of the perfect beauty, and tenderness and grace of our Father in Heaven.

"Like as a Father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." "I and the Father are one." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life."

II. He came that he might bring heaven nearer and make it more real and more precious to our souls. Apart from the Gospel our ideas of heaven are remote and without allure. Christ tells us that in heaven we both serve and sing. There shall his servants serve him, as we move on swift and eager wing to do our master's will. We join the heavenly choirs and sing the praises of the Lamb that was slain and that liveth again. That is a marvelous picture which he gives his beloved disciple in Rev. 7:13-17. "Who are these in white robes and whence came they? - - - These are they that came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." No weariness, no sickness, no sorrow, no tears - that is Heaven!

III. Above all Christ came to earth to redeem sinners. Because there was no other "eye to pity, and none other arm to help Christ Jesus came to save." "The son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." For God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ Jesus stooped to save us. Paul heard the savior's wondrous offer and accepted it and with this acceptance he accepted the responsibilities involved. For if we are saved by the blood of Christ we are saved to serve Him who died for us.

So for thirty years, or more, Paul has devoted all his splendid powers of mind and heart and body to the service of Christ and of dying men. He went everywhere in Jesus name and endured every form of trial and suffering for the sake of Christ who died for him. And now as the sun is near its setting, "life's fitful fever" is almost ended, he stands with head erect and uncovered brow and cries: "I am now ready to be offered, and my "sailing date" is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which Christ the righteous Judge shall give me in that day."

So for everyone who has loved and served our Redeemer - King a like reward is promised. Alike in kind but differing in degree. We are saved by the sacrifice of Christ and that salvation is abundant and complete. But we are rewarded each according to his work. You could not expect that the reward of the thief on the cross, who found Christ in the last hour of his life, would equal that of the great Apostle who served and suffered for thirty long years. Each was re-

warded according to his work, and each received all that his hungry heart could contain. Every man according to his work.

When the First World War had ended Gen. Pershing came home and was accorded a welcome such as no American before him had ever received. When his ship passed Sandy Hook every whistle on ship or shore was opened wide and shouted its raucous welcome. When the ship had docked he entered a car and was driven for miles up Broadway and 5th Avenue amid vast throngs that crowded the streets, and rent the air with their shouts of welcome to the returning conqueror. Surely no greeting could grander be.

About the same time I was on a train in the PeeDee Section. When I entered the car I noticed a young lad in khaki who had a friendly word for all. He too was coming home from the war. When the engine blew the soldier lad hurried to the door, and I put up the window to see what would happen. When the train came to a halt I noticed a plain little woman in black standing near the steps, and this lad stepped off the train into his mother's arms. When their greetings were over they turned and walked away, he with his arms around the mother's waist and she with her arm around her boy, and on their faces was a light that never was on sea or land. In thinking over those two events I have wondered whether after all the Lad's welcome was not richer than that which greeted the Commander-in-chief. For Pershing's welcome came from the head of an impersonal multitude; the lad's welcome came from a mother's heart. And each was content.

So will we be content for each will have a reward that will fill his heart to overflowing, when the Father welcomes us home "from the Far Country."

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